

Iconography after the Quinisext Council (c. 680–720)

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For my brothers, Benjamin and Nathan

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Abbreviations

<i>Acts</i>	H. Ohme (ed.), <i>Concilium Constantinopolitanum anno 691/2 in Trullo habitum (Concilium Quinisextum)</i> , ACO II.2.4 (Berlin, 2013); G. Nedungatt and M. Featherstone, <i>The Council in Trullo Revisited</i> (Rome, 1995). Individual canons will be cited first, followed by page numbers from <i>Trullo Revisited</i> . All translations below are from Nedungatt and Featherstone unless indicated otherwise.
ACO	Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum
<i>BHG</i>	F. Halkin (ed.), <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca</i> , 3 rd edn., Subsidia Hagiographica 47 (Brussels, 1957)
<i>Build.</i>	Procopius of Caesarea, <i>De Aedificibus</i> , J. Haury (ed.), <i>Procopii Caesariensis opera Omnia</i> , III.2 (Leipzig, 1905). H. B. Dewing (trans.), LCL 343 (London, 1961). All translations below are from Dewing.
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
C(s)	Canon(s)
CCSG	Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca (Turnhout, 1977–)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina (Turnhout, 1953–)
CPG	Clavis Patrum Graecorum (Turnhout, 1974–)
CS	Christian Studies
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>Hodegos</i>	Anastasius of Sinai, <i>Viae Dux</i> , K.-H. Uthemann (ed.), CCSG 8 (Turnhout, 1981). (CPG 7745). All translations below are from A. Kartsonis unless indicated otherwise.
<i>Homilia</i>	Anastasius of Sinai, <i>Homilia de sacra synaxi</i> , PG 89: 825–49. (CPG 7750).
<i>Ladder</i>	John Climacus, <i>Scala Paradisi</i> , PG 88: 631–1164. (CPG 7852). L. Moore (trans), <i>The Ladder of Divine Ascent</i> (London, 1959). Citations will designate the step and section according to Moore’s translation, followed by the column number and letter from PG. All translations below are from Moore.
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
<i>LP</i>	L. Duchesne (ed.), <i>Liber Pontificalis</i> , 3 vols. (London, 1886). English translation by R. Davis (ed.), <i>The Book of Pontiffs</i> , TTH 6 (Liverpool, 2000). Below, the section will be cited followed by the corresponding translated pages in Davis.
LXX	Septuagint
M(s)	Miracle(s)
<i>Meadow</i>	John Moschus, <i>Pratum Spirituale</i> , PG 87C: 2851–3116; J. Wortley (ed.), <i>The Spiritual Meadow</i> , CS 139 (Collegeville, 1992). Sections from Wortley will be cited first, followed by the page number.

<i>Miracles</i>	V. Crisafulli and J. Nesbitt (eds), <i>The Miracles of St. Artemios</i> (Leiden, 1997)
MS(S)	Manuscript(s)
NT	New Testament. All translations used are from Harold W. Attridge et al. (eds), <i>New Revised Standard Version</i> (New York, 2006)
OT	Old Testament
<i>PG</i>	J.-P. Migne et al. (eds), <i>Patrologia Cursus Completus</i> . Series Graeca. 161 vols. (Paris, 1857–66)
<i>PL</i>	J.-P. Migne et al. (eds), <i>Patrologia Cursus Completus</i> . Series Latina. 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–1900)
Q(s)	Question(s)
<i>Q&A</i>	Anastasius of Sinai, <i>Quaestiones et Responsiones</i> , M. Richard and J. Munitiz (eds), CCSG 59 (Turnhout, 2006). (CPG 7746); J. Munitiz (trans), <i>Questions and Answers</i> , Corpus Christianorum in Translation 7, (Turnhout, 2011). Citations will first designate the question number and then provide the page number from Munitiz’s translation. All translations below are from Munitiz.
<i>REB</i>	<i>Revue des Études Byzantines</i>
<i>Tales</i>	Anastasius of Sinai, <i>Narrationes</i> , A. Binggeli (ed.) (Sorbonne, 2001); D. Caner (trans), <i>Hagiography and Historiography from the Late Antique Sinai</i> , (Liverpool, 2010), 172–199. All translations below from <i>Tales I</i> are from Caner.
TDNT	G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds), <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , G. W. Bromiley (trans) (Grand Rapids, 1964)
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians

Introduction

The academic discussion of Byzantine iconography has long been fascinated with the Iconoclast Era. By comparison, the period immediately preceding Iconoclasm (c.680–720) has been largely neglected. Furthermore, even when this specific period is studied, there seems to be an implicit presumption that its importance is strictly dependent upon the later iconoclastic activity of the eighth and ninth centuries.¹ This is particularly evident with regard to the Quinisext Council (691/2). Consequently, this study aims to re-examine the Quinisext and consider how iconography at the turn of the seventh century may have been significant in its own right.

The Quinisext Council itself contains at least two features that suggest iconography in this period may have functioned in unique ways from iconography during Iconoclasm. The first feature is well known among art historians, although we will contend not well studied. It relates to three distinct canons of the council (Cs.73, 82, 100) that declare new mandates for how iconography should be regulated and maintained. Significant for this study is the fact that the bishops at the council reveal a very piecemeal and nebulous conceptualisation of iconography, as they had not yet been confronted by the universal attack on icons. This imprecise stance towards iconography is also reflected in contemporary hagiography of the period, which will be carefully inspected throughout this study.

Second, the Quinisext Council displays strong eschatological and apocalyptic imagery. Although this was undoubtedly associated with the growing success of the Islamic Caliphate, the views at the end of the seventh century were pointedly different from those during the first several decades of Islam's existence. Initially, Christians viewed Islam as a minor threat, and sometimes merely as another Christian sect.² But by the end of the seventh century, it was all too clear that Islam was indeed a distinct religion and that it was threatening the very existence of the Byzantine Empire. It may not be coincidence that while numerous apocalyptic declarations were signalling the 'decade of

¹ Take, for example, N. Baynes, 'The Icons before Iconoclasm', *Harvard Theological Review* 44 (1951): 93–106.

² For an excellent treatment of these attitudes see S. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton, 2010).

weeks', the Quinisext Council was also convened seventy years after Muhammad and his new followers migrated to Medina in 622. As the Byzantines searched for reassurance, the Bible was mined for apocalyptic images of hope. Although extant iconographic evidence is scant, the Quinisext along with apocalyptic literature of the time tells us a great deal about the iconographic decisions made by an imperial Church facing the eschaton.

Perhaps the most significant reason the iconographic consequences of these two factors have been overlooked is due to what can be called the 'linear model' of Iconoclasm, which has formed the backbone of most major works on the subject. Although it has been utilised in various ways, the linear model generally understands the imposition of Iconoclasm in c.730 as the inevitable climax of a regular pattern of development within a broadly homogeneous culture. Or, to quote the respected Byzantinist, Averil Cameron, it can be described as '... a seamless "rise" in the attention given to religious images from about AD 550, which culminated in the excesses to which the iconoclasts objected...'.³ Imbedded in this model are two related yet separate assumptions. First, it assumes that the Christian activity before Iconoclasm was *consistent* in its movement towards a climax. Thus, if Pre-Iconoclast attitudes regarding the importance of icons could be depicted as a line graph, there would be no sections with negative slopes. Second, the linear model assumes that Pre-Iconoclast opinions of icons were binary and closely related. Hence, Byzantines either passively accepted the ubiquity of icons or mildly complained about it, but everyone generally understood the importance and sanctity of images in the Church.

The predominance of the basic 'linear model' in scholarship on Byzantine Iconoclasm can be traced back to at least 1954 when Ernst Kitzinger wrote his laudable article, *The Cult of Images in the Period Before Iconoclasm*. Therein, he solidified what would remain the standard view for the next three decades:

There can be no doubt that in the second half of the sixth century the cult of images was vastly increased and intensified, primarily in the East, and that it maintained this new strength throughout the seventh century and, indeed, until the outbreak of Iconoclasm.⁴

³ A. Cameron, 'The Anxiety of Images: Meanings and Material Objects', in A. Lymberopoulou (ed.), *Images of the Byzantine World: Visions, Messages and Meanings: Studies Presented to Leslie Brubaker* (Farnham, 2011), 49.

⁴ E. Kitzinger, 'The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm', in *DOP*, vol. 8 (Cambridge, MA, 1954), 95.

The most valuable contribution of Kitzinger's article was that he carefully presented in chronological sequence most of the textual references to images that were available at the time. His presentation was more substantial than any before it and was all the more important considering the relative inaccessibility of the MSS. Kitzinger's model was widely accepted and the basic ideas were repeated in many works. It was notably espoused by Peter Brown in his article, *A Dark-Age Crisis*, which sought to explain Iconoclasm as the climax of consistent developments at the level of 'popular religion' within the empire stretching back into the earliest phases of late antiquity.⁵

Beginning in the 1980s, Leslie Brubaker has pioneered an alternative narrative for the Pre-Iconoclast era.⁶ She has rightly challenged the authenticity of virtually every image reference listed by Kitzinger and has greatly improved our understanding of iconophile interpolations. Based upon these later textual insertions, Brubaker has pushed back the inauguration of a mature 'cult of images' from the second half of the sixth century to the late seventh century. Still, like Kitzinger's and Brown's, Brubaker's model remains tacitly linear.⁷

This dissertation fundamentally challenges the linear model and will explicitly argue against it throughout the following pages. Where the linear model naturally employs *quantitative* analyses, this study will take a more *qualitative* approach to iconography. Where the linear model has observed increasing *appearances* of icons in the historical record, this study will concentrate on their changing and diverging *functions*. By considering the Pre-Iconoclast era in its own context, this dissertation hopes to demonstrate that a dynamic spectrum of iconographic perceptions existed before the famous theological debates polarised the empire into the opposing parties of 'iconophiles' and 'iconoclasts.' We are keenly aware of the dangers in allowing new generalisations to replace old ones. Although it will be difficult and tedious, this study will focus as specifically as possible upon individual circumstances with the goal of providing a detailed portrayal of a specific period rather than a generalised narrative for several centuries.

⁵ P. Brown, 'A Dark-Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy', *The English Historical Review*, 88 (1973): 1–34.

⁶ L. Brubaker, 'Icons Before Iconoclasm?', in *Settimane Di Studio Del Centro Italiano Di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo* 45 (Spoleto, 1998), 1215–54.

⁷ See Cameron, 'Anxiety of Images', 49.

Considering the specificity of this study, it is important to explain why and how our period was chosen. The chronological parameters (c.680–720) were largely influenced by the work of Brubaker. She identifies 680 as the approximate beginning of a cult of ‘holy portraits’ in several of her works.⁸ Thus, although this dissertation is primarily concerned with the status of icons following the Quinisext Council in 691/2, the beginning date of 680 for this study makes clear that we are directly addressing Brubaker’s view of the Pre-Iconoclast era. Additionally, the date 680 neatly aligns with the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680/1). Considering the fact that the Quinisext saw itself as a continuation of the previous two ecumenical councils, it is certainly worth exploring its relationship to the council of 680/1.

The selection of the 720 as the terminus for this study is slightly less important. One influencing factor is the idea of ‘Twenty Years of Anarchy’, a phrase coined by John Bury in reference to the years 695–717.⁹ Bury was focused on the rapid displacement of emperors during these years, but the fact that this period was extremely volatile is especially pertinent to our goal of deconstructing the linear model of Iconoclasm. Another factor in the selection of 720 is connected to the ‘official’ beginnings of Iconoclasm. Current scholarship – largely affected by the recent work of Brubaker and John Haldon – tends to downplay the role of Leo III’s edicts issued between c.726–730 in promoting Iconoclasm and instead emphasise the role played by his son, Constantine V.¹⁰ Nonetheless, it is clear that the long reign of Leo III (717–741) stands in marked contrast to Bury’s period of ‘anarchy’. Thus, regardless of who actually initiated Iconoclasm, our study stops well before the important actions of both Leo III and Constantine V. Because this dissertation omits the actual period of Iconoclasm, it will not be concerned with offering any explanations for its ‘outbreak’. Rather, the hope is that by filling at least some of the gaps existing in current historiography, future work may be better equipped to understand exactly how Iconoclasm arose.

⁸ Brubaker, ‘Icons Before Iconoclasm?’; L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca 680–850): The Sources: An Annotated Survey* (Aldershot, 2001); L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, C. 680–850: A History* (Cambridge, 2011); L. Brubaker, ‘Icons and Iconomachy’, in L. James (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantium* (Chichester, 2010), 323–37.

⁹ J. B. Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire: From Arcadius to Irene (395 A.D. to 800 A.D.)*, vol. 2 (Chicago, 1967), 2:352–86; cf. W. Kaegi, *Byzantine Military Unrest, 471–843: An Interpretation* (Amsterdam, 1981), 186.

¹⁰ Brubaker and Haldon, *The Iconoclast Era*, 69–155.

Like the time frame, the use of the term ‘iconography’ in the title has been carefully selected. The primary purpose in using ‘iconography’ rather than simply ‘icons’ is a matter of inclusivity. The ambiguity of the Greek word εἰκὼν has often caused frustration for scholars wishing to identify a specific type of image in the literary sources. The reality is that εἰκὼν was used in a very broad sense before the Iconoclast debates forced the Church to refine its terminology. Accordingly, this study hopes to consider a broad range of iconography. In addition to paintings on wood, we will include mosaics, frescoes, coins, and εὐλογίαι (pilgrim tokens) in our discussion of iconography. For the sake of clarity, the English word ‘icon’ will be reserved for specific references to paintings on wooden panels. The term ‘portrait’ may be used to describe the content of an icon, but will also be applied to images on coins, frescoes, and mosaics where an individual is depicted only above the chest or shoulders. This allows the word ‘image’ to describe other specimens, such as what was most likely featured on material objects like εὐλογίαι. Finally, the term ‘iconography’ will be employed in general ways to describe virtually any visual depiction except for words and geometric patterns.

The following pages will be divided into four chapters. The first chapter endeavours to give a sense of the incredibly complex and heterogeneous world of Byzantine iconography. In order to do this, it will first be necessary to deconstruct the linear models of Kitzinger and Brubaker. Once these linear models have been set aside, attention will shift towards the array of iconography present in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. This will include discussion of both literary references as well as extant artefacts. An important goal of this chapter is to partition iconography with respect to both form and content. Thus, an εὐλογία with an image of a saint will be juxtaposed with a painting of the saint on a wooden panel; images of Christ and Mary will be juxtaposed with images depicting saints and angels.

The second chapter attempts to locate a monastic view of iconography. It will be argued that icons played a different role within monastic communities than they did at the popular or imperial levels. To the best of our knowledge, no study of this period has specifically considered the role of icons within monastic communities. Modern collections of icons at monasteries such as Saint Catherine’s seem to demonstrate that icons were important for monks, but we will suggest that this importance was more inspirational than

anything else. This will be accomplished by focusing on the works of Anastasius of Sinai and John Climacus. The key themes of intercession, miracles, and especially death found in their writings will help us assess how icons may and may not have functioned within the monastic world.

The third chapter examines the importance of iconography from an imperial perspective. The primary source for this chapter is the *Acts* of the Quinisext Council. In addition to a re-evaluation of well-known canons of the Quinisext, special attention will also be given to the eschatological themes of the council. It will be suggested that the lamb imagery mentioned in C.82 reflects far more eschatological preference than previously thought. The *Apocalypse* of Pseudo Methodius – possibly written in the same year as the Quinisext – will serve as an integral text for the comparison of eschatological attitudes at the end of the seventh century.

Finally, the fourth chapter will consider popular attitudes of the laity towards iconography. This chapter concentrates on Anastasius' *Questions and Answers* (henceforth *Q&A*) and also makes use of the anonymous *Miracles* of Saint Artemius. Considerable space will be devoted to the afterlife, which was something of a preoccupation at the turn of the seventh century. Additionally, we will address the practice of Christian incubation and what such practices can reveal about the role of icons and other images in shrines. A new paradigm for understanding popular interaction with icons will be presented based upon the relation between the indwelling (ἐνοικέω) of the Holy Spirit and the part played by the laity in miracles involving icons.

Chapter 1

Deconstructing the Linear Model of Iconoclasm

As mentioned in the introduction, deconstructing the linear model of Iconoclasm is an essential prerequisite for the undertaking of this study. Until such deconstruction occurs, the evidence from the period of c.680–720 will continue to be interpreted in ways that support the linear narrative. We can begin by noting some of the specific flaws of the linear model, which are manifested to varying degrees by different scholars and in different works. First, scholars who utilise the linear model tend to misconstrue the body of evidence they believe to be relevant. Most often this occurs through the imposition of anachronisms on the sources. By focusing too heavily on an understood ‘end-result’ (e.g. the Council of 787), scholars describe the intervening period using terms that lacked precise definitions at the time or were absent from the contemporary sources. The prime example is the term *πρωτότυπος*, although *προσκύνησις* (*adoratio*) is also handled inconsistently. Both of these terms will be discussed below.

The second and associated problem of the linear model involves the neglect and marginalisation of iconographic references that fall outside the body of perceived relevant evidence. Brubaker famously focuses only on ‘holy portraits’ and thereby excludes a vast body of iconographic material and references from study.¹¹ Similarly, Thomas Noble uses as his criterion ‘pictures... that *did* things’.¹² Such observations are not necessarily intended as a critique of these authors’ methods. In fact, streamlined criteria are practically essential for those studies that cover a period of several hundred years. However, because seventh-century Byzantium offers such meagre evidence, the luxury of studying a specific type of iconography cannot be afforded if one hopes to understand the ‘cult of images’ as a whole. By focusing on a very narrow period of history, this dissertation hopes to treat with more precision the mixed body of iconographic sources that are often labelled as aberrations and anomalies.

¹¹ Brubaker, ‘Icons Before Iconoclasm?’, 1215–16.

¹² T. F. X. Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009), 30.

Kitzinger's Model

Kitzinger is indicative of the first flaw mentioned above because he interprets widely varying iconographic examples as collectively telling a consistent narrative. Brubaker takes issue with many of the literary sources Kitzinger uses to construct his model and on that basis essentially claims that he places the beginning of the cult of images too early (c.550).¹³ In contrast, our main critique is that Kitzinger concludes that increasing iconographic references prove that the cult of images grew in a 'seamless and organic' fashion from c.550–730.¹⁴ Also problematic is the fact that he focuses disproportionately on sources (especially those involving ἀποτρόπαια and παλλάδια) from c.550–650 to demonstrate a linear narrative that culminates in c.730. In fact, the only source he mentions from between 680 and 730 is the Quinisext Council.¹⁵ This is particularly strange when he himself describes this exact period as one of 'intensification' before the 'explosion' of Iconoclasm.¹⁶

Kitzinger uses broad criteria for what may be included in the 'cult of images'. To his credit, he carefully organises his study of icons into four distinct categories: devotional practices, magical properties, ἀποτρόπαια and παλλάδια, and images of miraculous origin.¹⁷ He conducts an admirable study concerning the qualities of these categories and offers convincing theories for how each came to be. For example, he deftly describes the subtle transition from honour given to imperial portraits after the Christianisation of the empire and weaves in other factors such as the concept of *ad statuas confugere*.¹⁸ However, the affinity he finds in the development of the four categories is not as streamlined as he would have us believe.

Kitzinger is able to achieve a sense of uniform development across his four categories by frequently discussing the blurring of the line 'between image and prototype'.¹⁹ The relation of the prototype to an image was famously addressed in the

¹³ See also the arguments of A. Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art Byzantin: recherches sur l'art officiel de l'empire d'Orient* (Paris, 1936), 169–170; A. Grabar, *L'Iconoclasme Byzantin: dossier archéologique* (Paris, 1957), 77–91.

¹⁴ Brubaker, 'Icons Before Iconoclasm?', 1217.

¹⁵ Kitzinger, 'The Cult of Images', 121.

¹⁶ Ibid., 85 for 'explosion' and 87 for 'intensification'.

¹⁷ Ibid., 96.

¹⁸ Ibid., 122–23.

¹⁹ Ibid., here at 101; cf. 123, 136, and especially 139–150.

fourth century by Basil of Caesarea in his *De Spiritu Sancto*.²⁰ Basil wrote, ‘the honour paid to the image passes on to the prototype’.²¹ Although he was referencing images of the emperor, Basil’s primary concern was to show that all members of the Godhead deserved equal honour. However, no other author uses the term *πρωτότυπος* with reference to images until John of Damascus in the eighth century. Therefore, Kitzinger’s consideration of image and prototype as ‘the most important feature of the cult of images in the period under review’ is a clear anachronism.²²

Once this anachronism is identified, the fragmentary quality of Kitzinger’s model becomes more obvious. There is, however, another feature of his linear model that acts as a strong unifying force: opposition. He claims that an ‘undercurrent of at least potential iconoclasm does in fact run through the entire history of the Church’, thus conforming to his linear model.²³ But this is quite difficult to demonstrate, especially since his use of the word ‘potential’ makes the claim nearly impossible to gainsay. Building upon the work of Norman Baynes, Kitzinger divides opposition to icons into that which came from within the Church and that which came from outside the Church.²⁴ Unfortunately, he can produce only two instances of opposition to images from the sixth or seventh centuries, both of which are found in peripheries of the empire. The first instance comes from Bishop Serenus of Marseilles, who either destroyed or removed images that he observed people adoring.²⁵ Valuable though this source is from an iconographic stance, as an example from the West it is not entirely helpful in establishing the attitudes or continuity of the cult of images in the eastern empire, where the bulk of evidence is found. The second instance is from Armenia. While this reference is probably more connected to the Byzantine ‘cult of images’, it too is somewhat obscure as it involves only a coterie of monks.²⁶

In view of the deficiencies in Kitzinger’s model, we must assert that the proliferation of the images themselves and ‘potential’ opposition to them does not demonstrate that they were growing in a *uniform* manner. Several examples will quickly

²⁰ Basil of Caesarea, *De Spiritu Sancto*, PG 32 (149C).

²¹ Ibid., ἡ τῆς εἰκόνοϛ τιμὴ ἐπὶ τὸ πρωτότυπον διαβαίνει.

²² Kitzinger, ‘The Cult of Images’, 101.

²³ Ibid., 85.

²⁴ Baynes, ‘The Icons before Iconoclasm’.

²⁵ Gregory the Great, *Epistola CV* (1027f.) and *Epistola XII* (1128f.), PL 77.

²⁶ Kitzinger, ‘The Cult of Images’, 132–33.

illustrate this reality. The first example concerns the trial of Maximus the Confessor (c.580–662) at which everyone involved placed their hands on the gospel book and icons in confirmation (βεβαίωσις).²⁷ Kitzinger notes this episode in his section on ‘devotional practices’ of icons and attempts to justify such categorisation by noting the tradition of using gospel books as ‘quasi-legal instruments’, but the correlation feels quite strained. Other images of our period had overtly didactic dimensions, such as the narrative scenes in Santa Maria Antiqua, while many MS illuminations probably functioned primarily as decoration (e.g. the Rabbula Gospels).²⁸ The images used by Anastasius of Sinai were neither didactic nor decorative, but functioned as the ideal weapon in his polemic against Monophysites.²⁹ Finally, Kitzinger leaves no room for the unique function of *ex voto* images, perfect examples of which are to be found in the Church of Saint Demetrius in Thessaloniki.³⁰ In light of these brief examples, it appears that icons gradually diverged in their *range* of function rather than maintaining a singular purpose.

At the end of his article, Kitzinger draws several radical conclusions about images, such as his assertion that artists before Iconoclasm were called to create a ‘shell’ in which heavenly persons could ‘take up their abode’.³¹ Most important for our study, however, is his general identification of images as ‘vehicle[s] for divine forces’.³² Apart from its chronology, this basic idea has been endorsed by most scholars since Kitzinger. We must remind the reader that our intention is not to debunk the fact that some images did adopt roles as vehicles to the divine, but rather to emphasise that the actual evidence is far more complex and dynamic than the narrative Kitzinger espouses.

Brubaker’s Model

Brubaker exemplifies the second flaw inherent in the linear model because she excludes evidence that could complicate or even nullify her conclusions. Along with Paul

²⁷ Maximus the Confessor, *Acta II*, 18 and 26, PG 90 (156A–B and 164A–B); cf. *Miracles*, M.18 (117).

²⁸ See C. Cecchelli, G. Furlani, and M. Salmi, (eds), *The Rabbula Gospels: Facsimile Edition of the Miniatures of the Syriac Manuscript Plut. I, 56 in the Medicaean-Laurentian Library* (Olten, 1959).

²⁹ See Kartsonis, 40–67 and Ch.2 below.

³⁰ See Fig.1.

³¹ Kitzinger, ‘The Cult of Images’, 150.

³² Ibid.

Speck, she has argued that a fully formed ‘cult of images’ only surfaced in the last quarter of the seventh century and that when it did, it featured an unprecedented understanding that supplicants could directly access the prototype through the transparent ‘window’ of their holy portrait.³³ Although she has observed that ‘different levels of meaning accrued to the holy portraits at different times’ and would not consider her model linear, Cameron has keenly observed that the Brubaker model is ‘equally linear’ in comparison to that of Kitzinger.³⁴ Nobody denies that at least some portion of Byzantium viewed holy portraits as ‘windows’ in the late seventh century. But we will show in the following chapters that this is a misleading criterion because icons were serving several other vital roles throughout the seventh century.

This dissertation is not the first study to challenge Brubaker. For instance, Gerhard Wolf considers Brubaker’s model to be ‘rather radical’ and Matthew Dal Santo has recently provided a convincing critique.³⁵ Dal Santo contends that the rich collection of extant εὐλογίαι, which is ignored by Brubaker in her arguments, should greatly influence our view of the Pre-Iconoclast world. He writes,

Complementing the well known icons of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints from Sinai and Rome, the pilgrims’ tokens and other images referred to here rather display the existence of a large body of holy portraits in contexts that made their veneration exceedingly likely by ca.600.

Even if Dal Santo exaggerates the likelihood that εὐλογίαι were venerated, their popularity cannot be ignored. Along these lines, our primary criticism of Brubaker is that she restricts her assessment of iconography to holy portraits and thus excludes a large collection of specimens that are valuable in understanding the period, namely εὐλογίαι and what she

³³ See Brubaker, ‘Icons Before Iconoclasm?’, 1216 and P. Speck, ‘Wunderheilige und Bilder: zur Frage des Beginns der Bilderverehrung’, *Varia* 3, *Poikila Byzantina* 11 (1991): 163–247; Although this argument first appears in Brubaker’s article, ‘Icons Before Iconoclasm?’, it has been repeated to varying degrees in several other works. See L. Brubaker, ‘Icons and Iconomachy’, in L. James (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantium* (Chichester, 2010), 323–37; L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca 680–850): The Sources: An Annotated Survey* (Aldershot, 2001); The recent formidable book features an integration of many updated studies, but its basic arguments regarding the period of this study (c.680–720) are mostly unchanged. L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, C. 680–850: A History* (Cambridge, 2011).

³⁴ Brubaker, ‘Icons Before Iconoclasm?’, 1235; Cameron, ‘Anxiety of Images’, 49.

³⁵ G. Wolf, ‘Icons and Sites’, in M. Vasilakē (ed.), *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), 26; M. J. Dal Santo, ‘Text, Image, and the “Visionary Body” in Early Byzantine Hagiography: Incubation and the Rise of the Christian Image Cult’, *Journal of Late Antiquity* 4 (2011): 31–54.

calls *ex voto* images.³⁶ Consequently, she concludes that ‘there is little evidence for a “cult of sacred images”” before 680.³⁷

Brubaker believes three main literary references signify that holy portraits were, however, being viewed as transparent ‘windows’ for accessing the divine by c.700. The first is found in *On the Holy Places*, written by Adamnan before 688.³⁸ He recounts a story that his fellow abbot, Arculf, had heard in the Holy Land in the early 680s regarding a soldier who spoke to an image of Saint George ‘as if it were George present in person’.³⁹ Although this important story is the most convincing example of the ‘transparency’ Brubaker studies, she herself admits the problematic nature of the story coming from the distant island of Ionia in the Latin West.⁴⁰ Additionally, we will demonstrate that the idea of ‘presence’ can be found much earlier in cultic settings, such as at the Church of Saint Demetrius in Thessaloniki.

The second reference comes from Stephen of Bostra’s work *Against the Jews* (c.700).⁴¹ Here, Stephen bases the legitimacy of προσκύνησις before icons on the fact that Moses and the nation of Israel venerated (προσκυνήσαντι) the cherubim that God had ordered be made for the temple. Stephen wrote, ‘Veneration is the symbol by which honour is given.’⁴² While Brubaker claims that such a statement regarding προσκύνησις reinforces the phenomenon of the transparent holy portrait at this time, there is nothing in Stephen’s writing that necessitates such an interpretation. In fact, it bears strong affinity to Basil’s statement, already mentioned, concerning *imperial* portraits. But while both Basil and Stephen speak of giving honour (τιμή), Stephen does not describe that honour being given to the prototype. Therefore, there is nothing to indicate that he means to convey what Brubaker means by ‘transparent’. The analogy is difficult because it involves cherubim rather than Christ, the Virgin, or the saints, and would require careful consideration of

³⁶ For Brubaker on *ex voto* images see Brubaker, ‘Icons Before Iconoclasm?’, 1235ff.

³⁷ Ibid., 1253.

³⁸ Adamnan, *De locis sanctis*, CCSL 175, 175–234; cf. Brubaker, ‘Icons Before Iconoclasm?’, 1248.

³⁹ Adamnan, *De locis sanctis*, CCSL 175, 231–32; cf. Brubaker, ‘Icons Before Iconoclasm?’, 1248–49.

⁴⁰ Brubaker, ‘Icons Before Iconoclasm?’, 1248–49.

⁴¹ For problems with the text see ns. 111 and 112 in Ibid., 1250.

⁴² Καὶ ἡ μὴν προσκύνησις τιμῆς ἐστὶ σύμβολον.

Stephen's theology to unravel. Although this reference to images is certainly fascinating, it does not seem to endorse Brubaker's model for the period.

Third, Brubaker mentions an image discussed by Anastasius of Sinai in his edited *Hodegos* (early 690s).⁴³ As will be considered further in Ch.2, Anastasius employed icons during his debates with Monophysites as a method of argument that could not be manipulated or reversed by his opponents. Although Anastasius was passionate about Christ's suffering in the flesh, he does not conflate his admiration for Christ with the image. Therefore, the image in the *Hodegos* really has nothing to do with the issue of transparency, and it is unclear how exactly Brubaker wishes this piece of evidence to fit in her presentation. Ironically, there is a seldom-discussed story in Anastasius' *Tales II* that may actually provide the strongest evidence for a 'transparent' holy portrait around the year 690, which we will discuss in Ch.4.⁴⁴

Literary references aside, Brubaker considers only a very narrow range of material artefacts for her study of the Pre-Iconoclast period.⁴⁵ Even if one allows her dismissal of εὐλογίαι, which can feature somewhat small and crude depictions, her neglect of *ex voto* images is surprising. Her reason for doing so is rooted in the fact that because these images were normally created in gratitude towards a saint, they could not possibly have acted as windows to the holy; in her own words, 'They conclude the healing (or whatever successful outcome was desired), they do not participate in it.'⁴⁶ Such a view may be conceded for the donor who commissioned the image, but does not seem plausible for all the others who would have viewed it. Churches and shrines were highly communal spaces with many layers of tradition and practice. The *Miracles* of Saint Artemius as well as stories from other cults – such as that of Saints Cosmas and Damian – provide examples of charismatic communal cultures where people slept, ate, heard dramatic stories of healing,

⁴³ For key information on the dating of *Hodegos* see A. Binggeli, 'Anastase le Sinaïte: récits sur le Sinaï et récits utiles à l'âme: édition, traduction, commentaire', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 2 vols, Université Paris IV (2001) 341–44.

⁴⁴ *Tales II*, §18; cf. Ch.4 below.

⁴⁵ Brubaker and Haldon's annotated survey includes a great deal of material culture, but sadly they exclude many of the specimens that are most important for the late seventh century, such as the images in the Church of Saint Demetrius and several early icons at Saint Catherine's monastery. See Brubaker and Haldon, *The Sources*.

⁴⁶ Brubaker, 'Icons Before Iconoclasm?', 1238.

and even had their hair cut by the resident barber.⁴⁷ Consequently, we must view these spaces and the images in them as extremely dynamic – capable of discarding as well as acquiring new meaning. Specifically discussing the Church of Saint Demetrius, Robin Cormack offers a vital perspective on this topic:

The icons record miracles and other benefits, but they are not just mirrors of events. Once set up they become effective vessels in themselves, to which prayers can be directed and from which further benefits are guaranteed. They offer security in life.⁴⁸

Even if *ex voto* images were viewed differently from others initially (which is unlikely), there is no indication that such restrictions were maintained for following generations. In fact, as implied by Cormack, the knowledge that a previous supplicant had obtained their request of a saint may have actually inspired later viewers of *ex voto* images to more eagerly direct their prayers to that specific image of the saint. In this regard, the Church of Saint Demetrius deserves additional discussion.

Brubaker's assessment of the mosaics (Fig.1) and frescoes in Thessaloniki concentrates on the possibility of images to 'intercede for individuals' and she insists that in the 660s holy portraits of Demetrius did not yet act as 'conduits to the divine that could be accessed by ordinary people'.⁴⁹ She bases this conclusion on the fact that individuals thanked Demetrius for 'direct intervention' rather than the image itself.⁵⁰ But if the images functioned as windows, would not the supplicants naturally thank the saint himself rather than the image? This becomes more apparent when we consider the multisensory experience of individuals at the shrine of Demetrius. As Liz James has shown, physical touching and kissing of images were often integral factors in experiencing them.⁵¹ When we add to this the 'permanence' of Demetrius' presence and the understanding that he actually inhabited his shrine in the church, every element of the shrine from the smells to the sounds becomes a component of the experience of Demetrius. Supplicants may not

⁴⁷ For the barber see M.34 in L. Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian: Texte und Einleitung* (Leipzig, 1907), 184–187; cf. I. Csepregi, 'The Miracles of Saints Cosmas and Damian: Characteristics of Dream Healing', *Annual of Medieval Studies at the CEU* 8 (2002): 89–121.

⁴⁸ R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Its Icons* (Oxford, 1985), 93.

⁴⁹ Brubaker, 'Icons Before Iconoclasm?', 1235.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ L. James, 'Senses And Sensibility In Byzantium', *Art History* 27 (2004): 522–37.

have given explicit credit to an image of Demetrius that they touched, but it undoubtedly formed a vital way to ‘access’ Demetrius.

The only other foundation Brubaker uses for her dismissal of *ex voto* images is a questionable interpretation of one of the most important surviving icons at Saint Catherine’s Monastery. The icon (Fig.2) features a bust of Saint Peter and three medallions (*cupula*) above his head.⁵² The central medallion is clearly an image of Christ, but because of a few irregularities, Brubaker interprets the medallions on either side of Christ (a young male on Christ’s right and a veiled female on Christ’s left) as supplicants of Saint Peter, thus making the icon an *ex voto* image. The icon features several classical characteristics, such as Christ at the three-quarters position, but also an aberration from the standard positions of John and Mary in the *Deësis*. Thus, Brubaker believes that the medallions cannot be Mary and John.⁵³ Although he recognised the unusual arrangement of these medallions, Kurt Weitzmann believed they do, in fact, depict Saint John and the Virgin and offered several reasons to support this view.⁵⁴ It should be added that it seems far more unusual for supplicants to be depicted on the same level of Christ, and that the reversal of John and Mary’s positions evident in the image are also a feature of the Sinai apse mosaic (Fig.10).

In conclusion, Brubaker’s model is arguably deficient due to its limited focus. As Dal Santo and Cormack have shown, εὐλογίαι and *ex voto* images played a vital role in the intercession of saints and made them plainly accessible to ordinary people. The inclusion of *ex voto* images in this study opens up a range of possibilities for how citizens may have viewed these images, a few of which we will now briefly examine.

The Variety of Iconography

The goal of this section is to further elucidate the unlikelihood of a linear model of Iconoclasm by quickly providing a basic account of the variety of iconography in existence c.680–720. This will proceed in two parts. First, we will briefly consider different physical forms of iconography. The second and more important part will consider the significance

⁵² K. Weitzmann, *The Icons Volume I: From the Sixth to the Tenth Century*, The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai (Princeton, 1976), 23–26.

⁵³ Brubaker, ‘Icons Before Iconoclasm?’, 1236.

⁵⁴ Weitzmann, *The Icons*, 24–25.

of different iconographic content. This is crucial because scholars have greatly neglected consideration of the distinction between the different subjects of Pre-Iconoclast iconography. In particular, it will be argued that the Byzantines did not perceive images of Jesus and Mary in the same way that they perceived images of saints, angels, and other holy people.

When considering the various forms of iconography, the shortage of extant panel icons from the Pre-Iconoclast era is often lamented. However, other significant sources of iconography are often neglected by scholars in their discussion. These include better-known specimens such as sculptures, mosaics, and frescoes, as well as a range of other objects such as textiles, coins, dishes, seals, ivories, and εὐλογίαι.⁵⁵ There exists a general assumption that because such items were not specifically painted on a wooden panel they could not have been viewed in the same way as ‘holy portraits’, but there is little evidence to support such an assumption. In fact, the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* demonstrates that some statuary was still viewed with incredible suspicion or accorded a great deal of power in the eighth century.⁵⁶ Brubaker and Haldon provide a laudable survey of many items for the period of Iconoclasm itself, but as is typical, the period before Iconoclasm is neglected. Curiously, even though the title of their book identifies 680 as the beginning date for consideration, the section specifically focused on icons only begins from 700.⁵⁷ Because each iconographic specimen can vary from the next, we concur with Cameron when she insists, ‘every individual example has to be taken on its own terms’.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, a dissertation of this length only permits a limited consideration of this vast and complex field. Therefore we must prescind from discussing most specimens in detail and will instead focus upon the most relevant form of neglected iconography for this study: εὐλογίαι.

Εὐλογίαι are vital to this study for several reasons. Most obviously, there is a sizeable collection of extant εὐλογίαι from sixth- and seventh-century Byzantium which feature detailed images of saints. In recent publications, Gary Vikan and Dal Santo have

⁵⁵ For a helpful recent work on these neglected sources see E. D. Maguire and H. Maguire, *Other Icons: Art and Power in Byzantine Secular Culture* (Princeton, 2007).

⁵⁶ A. Cameron and J. Herrin, (eds), *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* (Leiden, 1984).

⁵⁷ Brubaker and Haldon, *The Sources*, 55.

⁵⁸ Cameron, ‘Anxiety of Images’, 49.

both emphasised the visual significance of εὐλογία to the cult of saints in seventh-century Byzantium.⁵⁹ Additionally, literary sources reveal several instances in which these tokens functioned in miraculous ways. Finally, these objects are not discussed by Brubaker in her works on the Pre-Iconoclast period. Therefore, several brief examples will strengthen our critiques against the linear narratives of both Kitzinger and Brubaker.

Εὐλογίαι were often made of clay, and frequently shaped so that they could act as small containers for water, dirt, or oil from a shrine. Although most common in the sixth century, we have reason to believe εὐλογίαι were still familiar during the second half of the seventh century.⁶⁰ Εὐλογίαι were not always used or viewed in a consistent manner. Sometimes, for example, they could act as simple charms or amulets, as seems to be the case with the soldier in the *Miracles of Cosmas and Damian* who carried a token of the saints in his bag.⁶¹ In other circumstances, they could act as a ‘channel’ for the physical presence of a saint, as told in the *Life of Saint Symeon the Younger*.⁶² Occasionally, they even acted as specific agents of remedy, as at the shrine of Saint Artemius when a suppliant is commanded to melt a wax (κηρωτή) εὐλογία and apply it to his genitals for healing.⁶³

More important for this study is the consideration of the subject matter of iconography. Judging from both surviving literary and material evidence, we know that iconography of the seventh century could depict deities, angels, saints, donors, and members of the imperial family, frequently in assorted combinations. Surprisingly, scholars have failed to consider how the differences in these subjects may have affected their perception by Byzantines. Brubaker frequently discusses holy portraits as ‘mediators between the human and the divine’, but does not take into account the fact that certain depicted figures *themselves* were understood as mediators (i.e. the saints) and others were

⁵⁹ G. Vikan, *Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Art, Revised Edition* (Washington, DC, 2011); Dal Santo, ‘Visionary Body’.

⁶⁰ See *Miracles*, Ms.4, 21.

⁶¹ M.13 in Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian: Texte und Einleitung*, 133.

⁶² Speck thinks this story is an interpolation, but Dal Santo has rightly questioned his reasons for doing so. See Speck, ‘Wunderheilige und Bilder: zur Frage des Beginns der Bilderverehrung’, 138; Dal Santo, ‘Visionary Body’, 44.

⁶³ *Miracles*, M.16.

not (i.e. Christ).⁶⁴ Anastasius offers several important comments regarding these distinctions, and each will be considered carefully in the following chapters of this study. For now, this section simply aims to lay a theoretical framework for the basic spiritual hierarchy in Byzantium, so that the reader will become aware of what scholarship to date has neglected.

We begin with perhaps the most straightforward subject of iconography: imperial figures. When we consider the circulation of coinage, images of the emperor were ubiquitous in Byzantium. We have already observed how Basil discusses the practice of honouring the imperial portrait. Many have proposed how imperial portraits might have assisted the growth of icon veneration, but it seems to us that the opposite impact is equally plausible: perhaps the constant familiarity with imperial images actually numbed citizens to the possibility of venerating images of holy figures. The fact that images of the emperor could have appeared in very close proximity to images of Christ and the saints (as in Ravenna) may add strength to this theory.⁶⁵

Another important subject matter of iconography is angels, and several of the earliest icons in existence portray them in prominent positions (Figs.3–4).⁶⁶ Although several of these feature the common Christian type of angels flanking Christ and Mary, they demonstrate – *pace* Brubaker – that an organised spiritual hierarchy was in place during the sixth century.⁶⁷ Weitzmann’s B.3 icon (Fig.3) is especially intriguing because the sceptres of the archangels demonstrate that even the iconography of angels could be differentiated by multiple degrees.⁶⁸ In her 1998 article, Brubaker mentions an image of the archangel, Michael, claiming that it represents a rare and isolated instance of possible veneration.⁶⁹ Contesting this statement, Dal Santo cites another image of the archangel and

⁶⁴ Brubaker, ‘Icons Before Iconoclasm?’, 1234. Despite several references to Christ as ‘mediator’ in the New Testament, iconography suggests he was viewed far more often as the Pantocrator in Byzantium. See Heb. 8:5, 9:15, 12:24.

⁶⁵ See S. E. Bassett, ‘Style and Meaning in the Imperial Panels at San Vitale’, *Artibus et Historiae* 29 (2008): 49–57 and I. Andreescu-Treadgold and W. Treadgold, ‘Procopius and the Imperial Panels of S. Vitale’, *The Art Bulletin* 79 (1997): 708–23.

⁶⁶ See icons B.3, B.10, B.20, and B.21 in Weitzmann, *The Icons*, 18–21, 31–32, 44–46; cf. *Miracles*, M.34 when a child points to an icon of angels.

⁶⁷ Concerning the B.3 icon, Brubaker concludes that ‘The hierarchy of portraiture does not yet seem to have developed.’ See Brubaker, ‘Icons Before Iconoclasm?’, 1237.

⁶⁸ Weitzmann, *The Icons*, 19.

⁶⁹ Brubaker, ‘Icons Before Iconoclasm?’, 1226.

demonstrates from the writings of John of Thessaloniki that images of angels were, in fact, numerous and commonly venerated from the end of the sixth century onwards.⁷⁰

Iconography featuring saints is probably the most discussed of the Pre-Iconoclast period. The most popular saints lived during the first centuries of Christianity, many of them martyred in persecutions during the Tetrarchy, and therefore were disconnected from any real ‘living memory’.⁷¹ But we also read about depictions of local monks and saints who had died more recently and would likely have been remembered by friends and eye-witnesses.⁷² Such facts remind us that saints were not ‘divine’ in the same sense as Christ or Mary, and thus suggest the importance of considering images of these groups separately. Therefore, when Brubaker speaks about the function of holy portraits as a transparent window to the divine, one must ask exactly which images she is speaking of.

Brubaker avoids using the term ‘intercessor’ to describe the saints because it implies that prayer was directed towards them in their portraits, but we have already seen that this was probably the case.⁷³ Stories from collections such as the *Miracles* of Saint Artemius reinforce this description by recounting how miracles were seen as the product of an almighty God working through a subservient saint.⁷⁴ The frescoes and mosaics of Demetrius in Thessaloniki also provide a fascinating case study for this divine cooperation.⁷⁵

Finally, we must mention those images featuring Christ, the Virgin, or both. For the most part, it appears that supplicants were far more comfortable approaching images of saints than those of Christ or Mary, although Mary often appears in dreams as a comforting figure. Two of our earliest references to icons of Christ describe them as stern and harsh

⁷⁰ Dal Santo, ‘Visionary Body’, 51–52; cf. R. Cormack, ‘The Wall-Painting of St. Michael in the Theater’, in K. T. Erim and R. R. R. Smith (eds), *Aphrodisias Papers 2*, *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, vol. 2 (Ann Arbor, 1991), 109–22. Again, see B.3, B.10, B.20, B.21. Weitzmann, *The Icons*, 18–21, 31–32, 44–46.

⁷¹ George, Theodore, Demetrios, Artemios, Panteleimon, Menas, Cyrus and John, Sergius and Bacchus, and Cosmas and Damian were all believed to have been martyred sometime during the Tetrarchy, and most during the persecution of Diocletian. For helpful historical backgrounds of these saints see M. White, *Military Saints in Byzantium and Rus, 900–1200* (Cambridge, 2013).

⁷² See for instance, the story concerning the local abbot, Theodosios. *Meadow*, §81 (66); cf. Kitzinger, ‘The Cult of Images’, 107.

⁷³ Cf. 2 Macc. 15:11–16.

⁷⁴ Supplicants almost always give ‘glory’ (δόξα) or thanks to God after the completion of a miracle.

⁷⁵ Cormack, *Writing in Gold*, 50–94.

images, which would match some of the earliest surviving images of Christ, such as the Pantocrator icon at Sinai (Fig.5).⁷⁶ With these factors in mind, we should pause before assuming that stories such as Arculf's indicate that holy portraits were windows to the divine, and consider how the soldier who spoke to Saint George may have viewed the saint in relation to God.

In conclusion, it is most reasonable to deduce that icons in the Pre-Iconoclast era continued to grow in their *range* of function rather than their mere quantity (Kitzinger) or importance (Brubaker) alone. Even a concentrated focus on a specific type of iconography such as holy portraits is too simplistic because it conflates the different statuses of the subjects of those portraits. All these factors reinforce our contention that a linear model of Iconoclasm is difficult to maintain and prepare us to consider the unique ways iconography may have functioned in the monastic, imperial, and popular realms.

⁷⁶ Meadow, §230 (212); *Tales II*, §18; see icon B.1 in Weitzmann, *The Icons*, 13–15.

Chapter 2

Monastic and Ascetic Perceptions of Iconography

Byzantium boasted a rich history and culture of monasticism. The structure of both imperial administration and ecclesial offices created a world in which the *homo byzantinus* was well acquainted with the reality of hierarchy. In this world, the spiritual superiority of monks was taken for granted and the disparity between monastic and lay lifestyles was strongly felt.⁷⁷ Yet, despite this difference, no scholar has considered at length the potential differences in monastic and popular perceptions of iconography.⁷⁸ This chapter will attempt to elucidate these differences by focusing on monastic life and practice, specifically in the region of Sinai. The writings of two seventh-century monks, John Climacus and Anastasius of Sinai, will be considered for their general insight concerning monastic spirituality and also for their discussion of literal and symbolic iconography. Three themes natural emerge from their collective writings that are vital for our consideration of iconography at the end of the seventh century: intercession, miracles, and death.

These themes are crucial for this study because they envelope the primary factors involved in the operation and perception of icons, and especially relevant in this chapter for the unique reactions and applications they manifest in the monastic world. First, let us consider the idea of intercession. As evidenced by the hagiography of the period, intercession of the saints was central to their cult and the role of iconography within it.⁷⁹ However, the same cannot be said for monasteries. It will be shown that monks viewed *themselves* as intercessors, which strongly suggests that the intercessory function of icons within monastic communities was greatly if not completely reduced.

Second, the association of miracles with monastic communities and the discussion of miracles within those communities create a striking comparison to the contemporary role played by icons among the general population of Byzantium. The holiness of Mount

⁷⁷ *Q&A*, Q.24 (105); Procopius, *Buildings*, V.viii.5; D. Caner, *History and Hagiography from the Late-Antique Sinai*, TTH 53 (Liverpool, 2010), 221; N. Marinides, 'Lay Piety in Byzantium', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University (2014), 323–25.

⁷⁸ Some comments are offered by Brown. See, for instance, Brown, 'Dark-Age Crisis', 19.

⁷⁹ See Ch.1 of this dissertation and Dal Santo, 'Visionary Body'.

Sinai itself is enough to suggest that it replaced the need for a cult of images among monks by acting as the ultimate visual relic.⁸⁰ But more specifically, the miraculous function of advanced ascetics in monastic communities seems to fill a parallel spiritual need to the miraculous function of icons and holy portraits among the laity in the later seventh century. The austere appearance of advanced ascetics created in the minds of many Byzantines a striking image equally memorable to that of actual icons in churches and shrines. Thus, the Quinisext Council identifies these ascetics by their black clothing and ‘long hair’, and Climacus insisted that ‘The solitary [monk] is an earthly image (τύπος) of an angel.’⁸¹ It will be contended that these long-haired ascetics practically functioned as ‘living icons’.⁸²

Finally, Byzantine understandings of death intrinsically shaped how they interacted with icons, which largely depicted deceased holy figures.⁸³ With the exception of only a few stylites who were alive *during* their respective cultic activities, the most popular cults in the seventh century involved saints who had died hundreds of years earlier.⁸⁴ Thus, death – and specifically martyrdom – functioned as an implicit criterion for the operation of a saint in his shrine(s). But in monastic settings, death was perceived as the final climactic event of one’s ascetic journey, even as a miracle in its own right.⁸⁵ In the Sinai Peninsula especially, the concept of μνήμη τοῦ θανάτου (remembrance of death) was pervasive and encouraged monks to view their entire vocation as a ‘rehearsal of death’, which was noted even by Procopius.⁸⁶ Rather than seeking help for physical maladies in shrines of saints like much of Byzantine society, monks often welcomed their ailments. We will suggest that while the general populous sought to access the power of deceased saints

⁸⁰ See *Tales I*, §1; cf. Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 63.

⁸¹ For black robes and long hair see *Acts*, C.42 (124). For ‘earthly image’ see *Ladder*, §27.17 (1100A).

⁸² For the classic motif see R. Reitzenstein, *Historia Monachorum und Historia Lausiaca: Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Mönchtums und der Frühchristlichen Begriffe Gnostiker und Pneumatiker* (Göttingen, 1916), 172–180; Brown, ‘Dark-Age Crisis’, 12.

⁸³ For concerns of death see J. Haldon, ‘The Works of Anastasius of Sinai: A Key Source for the History of Seventh-Century East Mediterranean Society and Belief’, in A. Cameron and L. Conrad (eds), *Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East I: Problems in the Literary Source Material*, Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam (Princeton, 1992), 107–47.

⁸⁴ See n. 71 above.

⁸⁵ See especially *Tales I*, §8–10, §15, §29; for the death of Daniel the Stylite see Brown, ‘Dark-Age Crisis’, 12.

⁸⁶ Procopius, *Buildings*, V.viii.4. ἡκριβωμένη τις μελέτη θανάτου; cf. J. L. Zecher, *Role of Death in the Ladder of Divine Ascent and the Greek Ascetic Tradition* (New York, 2015), 207; Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 66.

they saw depicted in shrines, monks may have used similar icons as an aid for μνήμη τοῦ θανάτου.

Climacus and Anastasius both flourished in the Sinai Peninsula during the seventh century. Harkening back to the example of Saint Antony, Egypt was viewed as the epicentre of monastic and ascetic activity.⁸⁷ But due to its association with integral biblical narratives and conspicuous landmarks, the nearby Sinai Peninsula was also especially revered. After the destruction of the Scetis region in Egypt, the Sinai Peninsula apparently became the location *par excellence* for the monastic vocation.⁸⁸ According to Eusebius, the deserts of Sinai had been inhabited by Christians since the reign of Emperor Decius (249–51).⁸⁹ Monastic activity on the Sinai Peninsula in particular can be dated to at least 383, although it is probable that hermits had by this time already occupied the region for several decades.⁹⁰ It is also clear from the writings of Procopius that romanticised stories of the ‘precipitous and terribly wild’ Mount Sinai and its ‘terrifying manifestations of divine power’ were known in Constantinople at least from the time of Justinian I.⁹¹ In fact, pilgrims from all across Christendom flocked to the mountain ‘whose peak almost touches heaven’ in order to interact with the holy men, experience sacred sites, and receive spiritual enrichment.⁹²

The prestige of Sinai was not only reflected among average citizens but also by official members of the clergy. In fact, even the Pope acknowledged the spiritual potency of the monks in Sinai. In one of his letters, Gregory the Great asks for the prayers of a certain monk named Palladius, a priest at Mount Sinai.⁹³ The fact that so many Byzantines sought the intercession of living monks as well as deceased saints raises the question as to how those same monks viewed themselves in the spiritual hierarchy of supplication and mediation.

⁸⁷ P. Brown, ‘The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity’, *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 82.

⁸⁸ Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 65.

⁸⁹ Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 6.42.4.

⁹⁰ See the *Travelogue* of Egeria and the *Ammonius Report* in Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 17.

⁹¹ Procopius, *Buildings*, V.viii.1,7; καὶ ὄρος ἀπότομόν τε καὶ δεινῶς ἅγιον... καὶ ἕτερα ἅτα θεϊότερα. Cf. Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 277.

⁹² Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogue*, I.17; cf. Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 211–231.

⁹³ Gregory the Great, *Epistola IX*, PG 77 (801–802); cf. Caner 263.

The basic paradigm is summarised by Climacus in his *Ladder of Divine Ascent*: ‘Angels are a light to monks, and the monastic way of life is a light for all people.’⁹⁴ But within the monastic world itself there was discernably stratification. In the first half of the seventh century, Climacus outlined three general kinds of monasticism: ‘Either the retirement and solitude of a spiritual athlete, or living in silence with one or two others, or settling patiently in a community.’⁹⁵ Our sources reveal that by the end of the seventh century these varieties of monasticism had become even more diversified so that official rules were required to regulate this complex world of monastic occupations.⁹⁶

Anyone could become a monk, regardless of past sins.⁹⁷ After renouncing their former life in the world, they were required to serve a brief training period. For much of early monasticism the standard period of training had been two years, but towards the end of the seventh century ecclesial authorities were trying to increase this to four years.⁹⁸ This was served in the κοινόβιον (lit. ‘shared life’), the main monastery complex where monks lived in community and where the initiates performed a variety of practical chores.⁹⁹ After the period in service to the community, they were tonsured and had several options for their monastic life.¹⁰⁰ A monk could remain in the κοινόβιον and continue to take part in the activities of community life, and no doubt a large number opted for this choice judging from the size of the complex at Mount Sinai and the numbers required for administrative tasks and general operation. But the cenobitic life was neither the most ambitious nor rewarding. Rather, our sources clearly imply that the isolated life of a spiritual athlete in the desert was the supreme monastic calling.

As indicated by vocabulary used in our sources, this could be accomplished in several ways. Younger monks often found a master with whom they could live as a disciple. But the most revered status was that of a solitary monk. A frequent designation for a solitary desert dweller is ἀναχωρητής (anchorite), which connotes someone who has

⁹⁴ *Ladder*, §26.31 (1020D): φῶς μὲν μοναχοῖς ἄγγελοι· φῶς δὲ πάντων ἀνθρώπων μοναδικὴ πολιτεία.

⁹⁵ *Ladder*, §1.26 (641B): Ἐν τρισὶ γενικωτάταις καταστάσεσι καθισμάτων ἅπαντα ἡ μοναχικὴ πολιτεία περιέχεται· ἢ ἐν ἀθλητικῇ ἀναχωρήσει, καὶ μονίᾳ· ἢ μετὰ ἑνός, ἢ πολὺ δύο ἡσυχάζειν· ἐν κοινοβίῳ ὑπομονητικῶς καθέζεσθαι.

⁹⁶ See especially *Acts*, Cs.40–49 (119–131).

⁹⁷ *Ladder*, §1.19 (640A); *Acts*, C.43 (125).

⁹⁸ *Acts*, C.41 (121–123).

⁹⁹ *Tales I*, §39; cf. n. 122 in Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 194.

¹⁰⁰ *Tales I*, §10–11; cf. Zecher, *Role of Death*, 30.

simply withdrawn from the world.¹⁰¹ Another common term is ἔγκλειστος (recluse), which literally means ‘enclosed’ and specifies those monks who locked themselves in a small cell.¹⁰² The term ἀσκητής (ascetic) is sometimes used to apparently designate ‘advanced monks’, although it is more common to find it in adjectival form.¹⁰³ The specialised term, στυλίτης (stylite), is used in three of Anastasius’ tales and describes monks who dwelt on the top of pillars.¹⁰⁴ Last is the term ἐρημίτης (hermit), which is featured only once in André Binggeli’s edition of *Tales*, but several times in the Quinisext Council. This term literally means ‘of the desert’ and seems to carry some negative connotations. The bishops at the Quinisext viewed hermits as renegades who were seeking ‘vain glory’ and consequently demanded that they submit to the authority of monasteries.¹⁰⁵

This stratification of the monastic world is vital for grasping the spiritual and devotional practices of monks. We will see that their spiritual sustenance came largely from the advanced monks in their own communities rather than from the saints of popular cults. Even though the entire monastic profession was designed to play an intercessory role for the world, younger monks coveted the prayers of their elder and more advanced monks. A reference in *Tales I*, §2 by Anastasius along with considerable extant icons plainly demonstrate that icons were housed in monasteries in the seventh century.¹⁰⁶ The task remains to explore how monks might have interacted with icons of deceased saints in an environment so largely influenced by the presence and activity of ‘living icons’. Climacus and Anastasius both reveal a great deal about this question.

¹⁰¹ ‘ἀναχωρητής’ is used six times in Binggeli’s edition, (*Tales I*, §30.4; §31.12; §33.15; §34.2; §35.2,6); cf. Binggeli, ‘Anastase le Sinaïte’, 138.

¹⁰² ‘ἔγκλειστος’ is used three times in Binggeli’s edition (*Tales I*, §12.2; §29.2; *Tales II*, §25.17); cf. Binggeli, ‘Anastase le Sinaïte’, 30; cf. n. 55 in Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 181.

¹⁰³ Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 220.

¹⁰⁴ *Tales II*, §1, §5, §25. One of these is said to be Anastasius’ former disciple, John (*Tales II*, §5.11); cf. Binggeli, ‘Anastase le Sinaïte’, 324.

¹⁰⁵ *Acts*, Cs.41–42 (121–124).

¹⁰⁶ *Tales I*, §4: ‘They did not take faith, but continued to revile this holy place on account of the images and venerable crosses that are in it’ (Καὶ δὴ καὶ ταύτην τὴν ὀπτασίαν ἐωρακότες τότε τινὲς Σαρακηνοὶ αὐτόθι ἄνω ὄντες οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν, οὐδὲ ἐπαύσαντο τοῦ λοιδορεῖν αὐτὸν τὸν ἅγιον τόπον ὡς χάριν τῶν εἰκόνων καὶ τῶν τιμίων σταυρῶν τῶν ὄντων ἐν αὐτῷ).

*John Climacus*¹⁰⁷

Although Climacus never explicitly mentions icons, his work had significant impact upon monastic spirituality and helps to cast in sharper relief our understanding of how intercession, miracles, and death were understood by the monks themselves. ‘Climacus’ comes from the Greek word for ladder (κλίμαξ) and therefore does not designate any type of geographic location for our subject. Rather, as one can gather from his epithet, history has remembered him primarily for his writing of *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. The most helpful source concerning the life of Climacus comes from Daniel of Rhaïthou, who was a monk at the monastery of the same name.¹⁰⁸ Climacus came to Sinai as a young man and became the disciple of a monk named Martyrius.¹⁰⁹ After some time as a hermit, he eventually accepted a disciple of his own, called Moses, and finally became ἡγούμενος (leader) of the monastery.¹¹⁰ Climacus is mentioned frequently in the *Tales* of Anastasius and described with great reverence. He is well known for his personal display of tears, and writes about them often in the *Ladder*.¹¹¹

There has been considerable debate regarding the dates of Climacus’ life. At one time it was believed that he lived and died in the sixth century.¹¹² Major views in more recent years have been pioneered by scholars such as François Nau and John Chryssavgis, who argued that he died in 649 or 659 respectively, although Chryssavgis also allows the possibility of an even later date.¹¹³ Based upon Binggeli’s edition of the Anastasius’ *Tales*, most now agree that Climacus died between 659 and 669.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ Zecher prefers the title ‘John of Sinai’, but because Anastasius of Sinai is more important for the present study, the epithet ‘Climacus’ will be used for the purpose of clarity. See Zecher, *Role of Death*, 29ff.

¹⁰⁸ PG 88 (596–608).

¹⁰⁹ PG 88 (608B); cf. Zecher, *Role of Death*, 30.

¹¹⁰ *Tales I*, §3.

¹¹¹ Zecher, *Role of Death*, 31.

¹¹² See n. 17 in Zecher, *Role of Death*, 31.

¹¹³ J. Chryssavgis, *John Climacus: From the Egyptian Desert to the Sinaite Mountain* (Aldershot, 2004), 44; F. Nau, ‘Le texte grec des décrets du moine Anastase’, *Oriens Christianus* 2 (1902): 58–89.

¹¹⁴ In *Tales I*, §16 the phrase ‘ἁββᾶ Ἰωάννου τοῦ ἡγουμένου’ was translated by Nau as ‘John the Sabaïte’, but Binggeli has chosen John Climacus based upon the evidence from MS Q. See Binggeli, ‘Anastase le Sinaïte’, 189; Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 183.

The *Ladder* (also known as *Spiritual Tablets*) is an ascetic guide consisting of thirty spiritual ‘steps’ towards God.¹¹⁵ Judging by the surviving MSS (over 700 in Greek alone) it quickly became popular throughout Byzantium.¹¹⁶ However, it was clearly intended for a specific group of monks, as it is addressed to John, the abbot of Rhaithou.¹¹⁷ It is with this specific audience in mind that we consider the themes of intercession, miracles, and death.

The monastic role of intercession described by Climacus is vivid and powerful.¹¹⁸ The following excerpt from the *Ladder* gives an invaluable sense of how monks viewed themselves in the spiritual hierarchy of intercession:

Those whose mind has learned true prayer converse with the Lord face to face, as if speaking into the ear of the Emperor. Those who make vocal prayer fall down before Him as if in the presence of the whole senate. But those who live in the world petition the Emperor amidst the clamour of all the crowds.¹¹⁹

The contrast between monks and laypeople (‘those who live in the world’) is clear, and the advantage of those in the monastic profession is unmistakable. The possibility that the prayer of a layperson could reach God is portrayed as extremely unlikely while monks are able to speak directly into his ear. Accordingly, the *Ladder* constructs an environment where monks occupied an intermediary position and were expected to intercede for the world.¹²⁰ The fact that Climacus warns against praying too much for the opposite sex indicates that these requests were often submitted in person.¹²¹ The *Ladder*’s discussion of intercession suggests that because monks communicated directly with God, they had no need to make petitions to or access the divine through icons. If correct, this conclusion

¹¹⁵ See Marinides, ‘Lay Piety in Byzantium’, 319; Zecher, *Role of Death*, 43.

¹¹⁶ Zecher, *Role of Death*, 7–9; cf. K. Ware, ‘Introduction’, in C. Luibhéid and N. Russell (trans), *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, The Classics of Western Spirituality, 1982; cf. Marinides, ‘Lay Piety in Byzantium’, 320; cf. J. Waring, ‘Byzantine Book Culture’, in L. James (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantium* (Chichester, 2010), 282–87.

¹¹⁷ *Ladder*, Prologue (632A).

¹¹⁸ See especially *Ladder*, §26.19 (1017C), §28.36–37 (1136C).

¹¹⁹ *Ladder*, §27.21 (1100B): Ὡς ὁ νοῦς μεμάθηκεν ἀληθῶς εὐχεσθαι, οὗτοι κθρίῳ ἐνωπίως ἐνωπίῳ λαλοῦσιν, ὡς πρὸς τὸ οὖς τοῦ βασιλέως. Ὡς τὸ στόμα εὐχεται, οὗτοι ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς συγκλήτου αὐτῷ προσπίπτουσιν. Ὅσοι ἐν κόσμῳ διατριβουσιν, οὗτοι ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θορύβου παντὸς τοῦ δήμου τὸν βασιλέα ἱκετεύουσιν. Εἰ τὴν τέχνην ἐπισταμένως μεμάθηκας, οὐκ ἀγνοεῖς τὸ λεγόμενον.

¹²⁰ *Ladder*, §26.19 (1017C): σώματος, κόσμου.

¹²¹ *Ladder*, §28.57 (1140A): Φθλάττου μὴ, ὡς ἔτυχεν, ὑπὲρ εὐξασθαι θήλεως ἐν προσευχῇ σου, μήπως ἐκ δεξιῶν συληθῇ.

would mean the concept of ‘transparent’ icons in the late seventh century would hold very little relevance for the monastic world.

Next, Climacus bypasses – if not directly challenges – the need for miraculous icons and relics with the idea that miracles are the prerogative of monasticism, which is the ‘saviour of men’.¹²² Thus, he writes:

For who among them has ever worked any miracles? Who has raised the dead? Who has driven out demons? No one. All these are the victorious rewards of monks, rewards which the world cannot receive; and if it could, then what is the need for asceticism and solitude?¹²³

This passage seems to render the cult of saints obsolete. As a whole, the views in the *Ladder* concerning saints are quite distinct from those espoused in the popular culture and hagiography. For instance, rather than the joy and optimism usually exhibited towards saints by popular society in their cults, Climacus finds it necessary to address the tendency of monks to feel dejection and despair when considering the lives of saints. Rather than completely denying this response, Climacus guides his readers in how to harness these feelings:

They [the saints] teach you supremely one of two things: either they rouse you to emulation by their holy courage, or they lead you by way of thrice-holy humility to deep self-contempt and realization of your inherent weakness.¹²⁴

Rather than providing active assistance, the saints seem to play a passive role of inspiring monks towards ‘emulation’. This makes perfect sense when we consider that the *Ladder* incessantly exhorts its readers to grow in character in their progression towards God. Spontaneous relief or assistance provided by a saint therefore had little value in helping a monk mature in his ascent towards God. Consequently, it is not surprising that the idea of seeking any type of favour or assistance from saints is absent from the *Ladder*; their value is limited to the sphere of providing inspiration and motivation. With the knowledge of

¹²² *Ladder*, §26.19 (1017C): φύλαξ, ἀνθρώπων.

¹²³ *Ladder*, §2.9 (657B): Τίς γὰρ παρ’ ἐκείνοις θαύματα πεποίηκε πώποτε; τίς νεκροὺς ἤγειρε; τίς δαίμονας ἀπήλασεν; Οὐδεὶς. Ταῦτα γὰρ πάντα μοναχῶν τὰ ἔπαθλα, ἃ ὁ κόσμος χωρῆσαι οὐ δύναται. Εἰ γὰρ ἠδύνατο, περὶ τί ἢ ἄσκησις, ἤγουν ἡ ἀναχώρησις;

¹²⁴ *Ladder*, §26.126 (1060D): Ἄλογος λίαν ὁ ὑπὲρ φύσιν ἐν τοῖς ἀγίοις ἀκούων ἀρετὰς, καὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἀπολεγόμενος. Μᾶλλον δὲ δυοῖν θάτερόν σε ἀρίστως παιδεύουσιν, ἢ πρὸς πολλὴν σεαυτοῦ ἐπίγνωσιν· καὶ τῆς ἐνούσης σοι ἀσθενείας φανέρωσιν ἐπίστρέφουσι διὰ τῆς τρισσοσίου ταπεινώσεως.

how integral icons were for the recognition of saints, there is no reason to doubt that Climacus' advice also extends to the icons housed within monasteries.¹²⁵

Finally, the theme of death in the *Ladder* is predominant. This is most obvious in Step 6, 'On the Remembrance of Death' where Climacus explains, 'As of all foods bread is the most essential, so the thought of death is the most necessary of all works.'¹²⁶ However, Jonathan Zecher has keenly identified the careful and intentional integration of death in eighteen steps of the *Ladder*.¹²⁷ Consequently, Zecher argues extensively μνήμη τοῦ θανάτου is the 'central principle and organizing logic' of the *Ladder*.¹²⁸ For our purposes, μνήμη τοῦ θανάτου is most important for the way it affects the way monks of Sinai might have viewed icons of deceased holy men.

There can be no doubt that the theme of death was pervasive at Sinai before Climacus arrived. The *Report* of Ammonius recounts the twin slaughters of martyrs on the same day, forty at Mount Sinai and forty at Rhaïthou, a legend which was well known during the time of Climacus and Anastasius.¹²⁹ And whereas various popular cults often believed that the depicted saint was physically active in a church or shrine, monks relished the finality and closure of having reached the moment of death, from which they could peacefully await the resurrection of the body.¹³⁰ Consequently, icons in monasteries were likely to have reminded monks of their duty to die well – especially since most of the saints depicted were martyrs.

Moreover, the very bodily maladies and pains that inspired many laypeople to seek the help of saints through images were actually encouraged in the monastic world as an important method of μνήμη τοῦ θανάτου.¹³¹ Climacus exhorts his readers to this end:

¹²⁵ Vikar, *Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*; Dal Santo, 'Visionary Body'.

¹²⁶ *Ladder*, §6.4 (793C): Ὡς πασῶν τροφῶν ὁ ἄρτος ἀναγκαϊότερος, οὕτως πασῶν ἐργασιῶν ἡ τοῦ θανάτου ἔννοια.

¹²⁷ Zecher, *Role of Death*, 50–51.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹²⁹ For the Ammonius *Report*, see Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 141–171; for 'The Sinai Martyr Tradition' see 51–63 in the same work.

¹³⁰ For the physical activity of saints see *Miracles*, Ms.32, 34, 37, 41. For the finality of the tomb see *Ladder*, §4.94 (716B), especially the 'tomb before the tomb' (Μνήμᾳ σοι πρὸ μνήματος ὁ τόπος ἔστω).

¹³¹ See especially *Ladder*, §6.16 (796C), where the memory of death prevents an Egyptian monk from comforting the 'clay', his body: Διηγῆσατό μοι ποτε Αἰγύπτιος μοναχὸς, ὥς ὅτι μετὰ τὴν ἐν αἰσθήσει καρδίας τῆς τοῦ θανάτου μνήμης παγίωσιν, θελήσαντός μου χρείας καταλαβούσης μικρὸν τὸν πηλὸν παραμυθῆσασθαι, ὑπο τῆς μνήμης, ὥς ὑπὸ δικαστοῦ κεκώλυμαι. Καὶ τὸ θαυμαστὸν, ὅτι περ καὶ

Fix your mind to your soul as to the wood of a cross to be struck like an anvil with blow upon blow of the hammers, to be mocked, abused, ridiculed and wronged, without being in the least crushed or broken, but continuing to be quite calm and immovable.¹³²

This submission to abuse was largely sustained by the feeling of ‘assurance’ (πληροφορία) in one’s salvation.¹³³ The fact that assurance was only attainable for monks supports the idea that μνήμη τοῦ θανάτου and its accompanying practices were virtually unique to monastic environments.¹³⁴

In adumbration of our discussion of the *Ladder*, we can construct a reasonably reliable though simplistic model for the usage of icons in the monasteries of Sinai around the mid-seventh century. Based upon the important responsibility of monks as intercessors, it is probable that they did not view or use icons as personally viable means of intercession. Again, because miracles were considered the prerogative of the monastic vocation, it would have been contradictory for monks to seek such spiritual aid from icons. Finally, if monks received inspiration from icons rather than prayers or miracles, it is cogent that such inspiration was linked to the pervasive practice of μνήμη τοῦ θανάτου at Mount Sinai.

Climacus and Anastasius

Although Climacus slightly predates the main chronological focus of this dissertation, his work is important for its influence upon the monastic milieu of late seventh-century Byzantium and especially upon Anastasius. The connection between Climacus and Anastasius is somewhat debated, but not yet adequately studied. Their mutual experiences at Sinai form the obvious foundation for their potential interaction, but the lack of direct references in their writings has caused some to doubt any association. Still, the two authors share very similar concerns and attitudes. For instance, they both warn their readers about believing in dreams, describe how one’s relationship with God progresses through various stages, and demonstrate an acute concern for the well-being of

βουληθεῖς οὐκ ἠδυνήθην ἀπόσασθαι. Cf. 2 Cor. 4:7. Also see *Tales I*, §26, where Orentius embraces his injury to the extent of including it in his name ‘Orentius the Scorched-Hand’ (Ορέντιος Καυσοχέρης).

¹³² *Ladder*, §4.36 (700C): πῆξον ἐν ξύλῳ ψυχῆς σταυρῷ νοῦν ἄκμονα δι’ ἀλλεπαλλήλων σφυρῶν καὶ κτύπων τυπόμενον, ἐμπαιζόμενον, λοιδορούμενον, χλευαζόμενον, ἀδικούμενον, καὶ μηδαμῶς ἐκλυόμενον, μηδὲ θραῦσιν ὑπομένοντα· ἀλλ’ ὅλον λείον καὶ ἀκίνητον ὑπάρχοντα.

¹³³ Cf. *Ladder*, §26.117 (1060A), §28.43 (1137A).

¹³⁴ *Ladder*, §5.35 (780AB).

the laity. Zecher concedes that Climacus and Anastasius ‘write in a similar spirit’, but claims that because they do not use the ‘same vocabulary’ it is ‘difficult to show any direct correlation between them’.¹³⁵ However, along with Marinides, it is possible to identify a number of respects in which the writings of Anastasius demonstrate the clear influence of Climacus.¹³⁶

An easily recognisable similarity concerns the discussion of tears by both Climacus and Anastasius. Joseph Munitiz has noted this connection at the most obvious discussion of tears (Q.49) in his recent translation of Anastasius’ *Q&A*, but does not explicitly consider the connection to Climacus at Q.38. Munitiz also observes several other possible affinities such as Q.13 regarding heresy.¹³⁷ Nicholas Marinides has recently drawn attention to Q.91 in which Anastasius paraphrases two passages from Climacus, and suggests that Anastasius may have been one of the first people to read the *Ladder*.¹³⁸ The description of the Holy Spirit as an indwelling ‘fire’ also suggests a resemblance between the two authors.¹³⁹ Finally, the theme of death that is so clear in Climacus also forms the backbone of several arguments in Anastasius’ *Hodegos*.¹⁴⁰

Regardless of which dating scheme is chosen for the death of Climacus, the fact remains that both he and Anastasius were active around Mount Sinai at very similar times. Thus, it is perfectly possible to imagine how Anastasius could have been influenced by Climacus without necessarily interacting in person. However, based upon the many similarities of style and thought, it is more likely that Anastasius probably did interact with Climacus, although only for a short period. Such an explanation could explain how Anastasius may have deeply respected Climacus while never specifically mentioning him as a mentor or master. Indeed, Binggeli has suggested that *Tales I* may have been composed to commemorate the death of Climacus, and one senses that Anastasius probably had some personal interaction with him, even if the stories were collected from

¹³⁵ Zecher, *Role of Death*, 33.

¹³⁶ Cf. Marinides, ‘Lay Piety in Byzantium’, 342.

¹³⁷ J. Munitiz (ed.), *Questions and Answers*, Corpus Christianorum in Translation (Turnhout, 2011), 75, 142.

¹³⁸ *Q&A*, Q.91 (216–18); Marinides, ‘Lay Piety in Byzantium’, 343.

¹³⁹ *Q&A*, Q.6 (57–59); *Ladder*, §1.9 (636C), §26.63 (1025D), §27.47 (1109C), §28.45,51 (1137A,C).

¹⁴⁰ Discussed below.

other witnesses.¹⁴¹ We must now consider just how much Anastasius and his works can tell us about the Sinai milieu.

Anastasius of Sinai

Because of the variety of genres his corpus of writing encompasses, Anastasius of Sinai is an invaluable resource for the discussion of icons in our period.¹⁴² Like Climacus, he frequently touches upon the themes of intercession, miracles, and death in his writings. But unlike Climacus, Anastasius explicitly mentions and discusses icons at several points. Adherents of the linear model of Iconoclasm have interpreted this disparity as evidence for the increase in the cult of images, but the fact that Anastasius wrote vastly more and different types of literature than Climacus renders the significance of any lack of explicit icon mention in the *Ladder* a moot point.

Considerable doubt has surrounded the authenticity of the many works bearing the name of Anastasius for the past several centuries, but such suspicion has intensified ever since Albert Ehrhard drew specific attention to the problem in 1897.¹⁴³ While there are still several works attributed to him that remain dubious, continuing collaborative research has convincingly demonstrated the authenticity of his major works, three of which play a significant part in this dissertation: *Q&A*, *Tales*, and *Hodegos* (alternatively known as *Quaestiones et Responsiones*, *Narrationes*, and *Viae Dux* respectively).¹⁴⁴ Scholars such as Munitiz, John Baggarly, and Clement Kuehn have identified several phrases and stylistic conventions that can be considered characteristic of Anastasius, such as his continued

¹⁴¹ Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 173.

¹⁴² Allen notes that the *Hodegos* alone contains ‘erotapokriseis, aporiai, dialexis, epilysis, etymologies, a synopsis of synods, patristic florilegia, and even a satirical sketch directed against the Severans’. See P. Allen, ‘Anastasii Sinaitae Viae Dux’, *Vigiliae Christianae* 36 (1982): 296; cf. Marinides, ‘Lay Piety in Byzantium’, 337.

¹⁴³ A. Binggeli, ‘Anastasius of Sinai’, in D. Thomas and B. Roggema (eds), *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 2009), 193–202; ‘Introduction’ in Anastasius of Sinai, *Hexaameron*, C. Kuehn and J. D. Baggarly (eds) (Roma, 2007), XIII–XXIII; J. Munitiz, ‘Anastasios of Sinai: Speaking and Writing to the People of God’, in M. B. Cunningham and P. Allen (eds), *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1998); Haldon, ‘The Works of Anastasius’; M. Richard, ‘Anastase le Sinaïte l’Hodegos et le Monothélisme’, *REB* 16 (1958): 29–42; Marinides, ‘Lay Piety in Byzantium’, 336–46.

¹⁴⁴ See the ‘Introduction’ by Munitiz in *Hexaameron*, XIII–XXIII.

warnings against questioning the ways of God.¹⁴⁵ The important concept of indwelling (ἐνοικέω), which will be studied in Ch.4, is also consistently used in several of Anastasius' works.

Anastasius was a prolific writer and extremely active, travelling all across the eastern Mediterranean in order to debate heretics and encourage struggling Christians. Based upon a reference in *Tales II*, it would appear that Anastasius was born in the southern coastal city of Amathous on Cyprus around 630.¹⁴⁶ In a different work, he mentions that twenty years have passed since the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680/1) so most scholars now agree that he probably died in the first few years of the eighth century.¹⁴⁷ Anastasius left Cyprus sometime after the Arab invasion of the island in 653 as a young man already quite familiar with ecclesiastical affairs from his training under a local bishop called John.¹⁴⁸ Like Climacus, he experienced first-hand a range of monastic vocations, including life with a disciple and life as a hermit.¹⁴⁹ He demonstrates thorough philosophical education in his writings and was also fascinated by medicine, which is probably related to his role in the infirmary at Sinai.¹⁵⁰ Anastasius' varied experiences and especially his extensive interactions with the outside world allow us to read him as one who had invaluable perspective into the world of monastic spirituality and devotion.

The theme of monastic intercession is primarily found in Anastasius' *Tales*. This work actually consists of two distinct collections, written at different times and for different purposes: *Tales I* (or *Tales of Sinai*) and *Tales II* (or *Tales Beneficial to the Soul*). As noted above, the first collection makes frequent mention of the Sinai ἡγούμενος, Climacus, and was probably composed between 660–670 in order to commemorate his

¹⁴⁵ *Q&A*, Q.9 (62); we also find the use of ψηλαφάω (cross-examine) in Q.9 to be characteristic. Cf. 'ψηλαφάω' in K.-H. Uthemann (ed.), *Viae Dux*, 380.

¹⁴⁶ *Tales II*, §28: ἐν τῇ πατρίδι Ἀμαθοῦντι γεγενῆνης.

¹⁴⁷ Anastasius of Sinai, *Sermones duo in constitutionem hominis secundum imaginem Dei: necnon, Opuscula adversus monotheletas*, CCSG 12, 61.

¹⁴⁸ For mention of the Arab invasions see *Tales II*, §17. For dating see L. Zavagno, 'At the Edge of Two Empires: The Economy of Cyprus between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (650s–800s CE)', *DOP* 65/66 (2011): 121–55; Marinides, 'Lay Piety in Byzantium', 337.

¹⁴⁹ Anastasius had at least one disciple named John, whom he mentions in *Tales II*, §5. Anastasius also mentions that he lived as a hermit at Arselaïou and also at Gouda, *Tales I*, §14 and §31.

¹⁵⁰ *Tales I*, §3. For evidence suggesting that Anastasius actually resided at Rhaïthou, see Binggeli, 'Anastase le Sinaïte', 265.

death.¹⁵¹ The second collection of tales, written at least two decades later, was written to encourage lay Christians and focuses mostly on events outside the monastic world.¹⁵² The first collection bears resemblance to other stories about desert fathers, such as those in the *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschus, and has been long confused by later editors who thought of such literature as ‘fair game for division, excerpting, and interpolation’.¹⁵³ However, thanks to Binggeli’s recent critical edition, we can be confident that the *Tales* are genuine works of Anastasius and reflect the current views of his time.

One story important for the concept of monastic intercession involves a Christian slave who once had the rare experience of spotting a hermit while grazing his camels. Determined to not let such a moment be wasted, he said to himself, ‘Believe me, I’m not going to leave until I’ve clasped the old man’s feet and he’s said a prayer for me, so that the Lord might free me from this oppression.’¹⁵⁴ This story reinforces the belief, already observed in the *Ladder*, that monks and especially solitary hermits were considered as viable and potent sources of intercession.

A different passage is more illustrative of the practice of intercession *within* the stratified monastic environment of Sinai. In *Tales I*, §30, an experienced monk says to his disciple,

Child, during these holy days, let us observe the following conduct: let us travel around the desert, as God will surely privilege us to see one of His slaves, the anchorites, and *receive a prayer from him* [emphasis added].¹⁵⁵

Unfortunately for the disciple and his master, the anchorites disappeared before they were able to ‘receive a prayer’. However, the monastic duo felt blessed for catching a mere glimpse of the ascetics, and trusted their salvation had been positively affected thanks to the ‘intercessions and supplications and toil and sweat’ of the holy men.¹⁵⁶ The importance

¹⁵¹ For the mention of “Ἰωάννης ὁ ὀσιώτατος ἡγούμενος” see *Tales*, I.3; Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 173.

¹⁵² Discussed below in Ch.4.

¹⁵³ Marinides, ‘Lay Piety in Byzantium’, 338.

¹⁵⁴ *Tales I*, §36. Πίστευσον, οὐκ ἀπέρχομαι εἰ μὲ κρατήσω τοὺς πόδας τοῦ γέροντος, καὶ ποιήσει μοι εὐχὴν ἵνα ὁ Θεὸς ἐλευτερώσῃ με ἐκ τῆς ἀνάγκης ταύτης. Καὶ ἀποστραφείς καὶ πολλὰ περιβλεψάμενος καὶ ζητήσας οὐκέτι εἶδον αὐτόν, καίτοιγε τοῦ τόπου καταροῦ καὶ αὐλοῦ ὑπάρχοντος.

¹⁵⁵ *Tales I*, §30. Τέκνον, ταῖς ἀγίαις ἡμέραις ταύταις ταύτην τὴν πολιτείαν κρατήσωμεν. Περιέλθωμεν τὴν ἔρημον, πάντως ἀξιοῖ ἡμᾶς ὁ Θεὸς ἰδέσθαι τινὰ τῶν δούλων αὐτοῦ τῶν ἀναχωρητῶν καὶ λαθεῖν μίαν εὐχὴν παρ’ αὐτοῦ.

¹⁵⁶ *Tales I*, §30. καλῶς ἀξιοῖ ἡμᾶς ὁ Χριστὸς ἐλθεῖν πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι αἰῶνι διὰ τῶν πρεσθειῶν καὶ ἱκεσιῶν καὶ κόπων καὶ ἰδρώτων αὐτῶν.

of visual perception at a specific location in this story is meaningful, and has serious implications for understanding monastic perceptions of iconography. The act of touch in ‘clasping the old man’s feet’ also adds a valuable dimension. Just as laypeople had to view, hold, or kiss an icon to receive its effects, so also monks had to make an extra effort to obtain the spiritual benefits of the holy ascetics. It seems unlikely that monks would have placed such value on interaction with holy ascetics or have gone through the effort of wandering the barren wilderness if they could have obtained similar or equal benefit from interaction with the icons in their monasteries and cells.

Tales I also teaches us more about miracles in the monastic milieu. The monks of Sinai possessed several unique miraculous abilities that juxtapose those of icons. For instance, in *Tales I*, §13, a paralytic is confronted by the Θεοτόκος in a vision and told how he can be healed. Rather than presenting himself before the image of a saint in a shrine, he is told to present himself to the ἡγούμενος, Isaurus, who quickly heals him. Likewise, *Tales I*, §17 describes how a monk named George was able to produce a flow of oil, something also associated with icons of the saints.¹⁵⁷

But the most important for this study is the power to become invisible or vanish.¹⁵⁸ As we have already partially seen in the stories concerning intercession, ‘to catch a mere glimpse of a Sinai anchorite constitutes a spiritual revelation in itself’.¹⁵⁹ This perception may have partially evolved from the simple tendency of hermits to retreat into their caves rather than interact with the outside world. But most occurrences of vanishing mentioned in the *Tales* are clearly miraculous. For instance, in *Tales I*, §2, three advanced ascetics are able to make themselves invisible when they are nowhere near their cells and in *Tales I*, §36 another monk disappeared from sight where the desert was ‘bare and without trees’.¹⁶⁰ Perhaps the most spectacular story of all relates a monk who, thinking a Saracen was approaching, ‘changed his shape into a palm tree to escape notice’.¹⁶¹ These types of fantastical miracles are, of course, not unusual in hagiography, but Anastasius claimed that

¹⁵⁷ Cf. *Tales II*, §2.

¹⁵⁸ *Tales I*, §2, §30–31, §33, §35–36.

¹⁵⁹ Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 65; Brown, ‘Dark-Age Crisis’, 12.

¹⁶⁰ *Tales I*, §36. Πίστευσον, οὐκ ἀπέρχομαι εἰ μὲ κρατήσω τοὺς πόδας τοῦ γέροντος, καὶ ποιήσει μοι εὐχὴν ἵνα ὁ Θεὸς ἐλευτερώσῃ με ἐκ τῆς ἀνάγκης ταύτης. Καὶ ἀποστραφείς καὶ πολλὰ περιβλεψάμενος καὶ ζητήσας οὐκέτι εἶδον αὐτόν, καίτοιγε τοῦ τόπου καταροῦ καὶ ἀύλου ὑπάρχοντος.

¹⁶¹ *Tales I*, §32. νομίσας αὐτὸν Σαρακηνὸν εἶναι μετεμορφώθη εἰς φοῖνικα διαλαθεῖν βουλόμενος.

it was the unique ‘custom’ of the Sinai ascetics ‘to reveal themselves and to conceal themselves whenever they want, by power of God’.¹⁶² Again the significance of visual perception is vital. In a manner reminiscent of Brown’s ‘holy man’, these frequent references to hermits in *Tales* suggests that coenobitic monks perceived these wandering ascetics rather than icons or shrines as loci for accessing the divine.¹⁶³

Finally, and most importantly, we must consider how Anastasius treats and employs the theme of death. Death and the afterlife – as important topics in the seventh century – are brought up in practical questions directed at Anastasius in *Q&A*. But the *Hodegos* (‘handbook’) easily provides the richest treatment of death and explicitly links it with specific icons.¹⁶⁴ This work was completed in the early 680s, after which Anastasius made minor revisions and added σχόλια in the early 690s.¹⁶⁵ Thus, it fits neatly within the period of this study. Because the *Hodegos* is filled with careful discussion of theology, heresies, and technical terms,¹⁶⁶ it is safe to assert along with Marinides that it was written for ‘elite theologians’.¹⁶⁷ Accordingly, it is perfectly conceivable that this handbook was especially intended for the monastic communities to which Anastasius had ties. Regardless, its discussion of death offers a potent glimpse into how monks may have been thinking at the time.

Anastasius employs the theme of Christ’s death as his preferred argument against the Monophysites. He is so familiar with the theme of death that he is able to creatively nuance it in order to precisely attack four different strains of Monophysitism: the Theopaschites, the Akephaloi, the Gaianites, and the Harmasties. Obviously, the crucifixion and death of Christ is of absolute importance for Christianity and had been discussed and emphasised incessantly since the inception of the faith. However, Anastasius’

¹⁶² *Tales I*, §31. “Ἔθος γὰρ τοῦτο τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀναχωρηταῖς καὶ ἐν ζωῇ καὶ μετὰ θάνατον, ὅτε θέλουσιν φαίνεσθαι, καὶ ὅτε θέλουσιν κρύπτεσθαι τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ Θεοῦ.

¹⁶³ Brown, ‘Holy Man’; Brown, ‘Dark-Age Crisis’, 12.

¹⁶⁴ *Hodegos* literally means ‘guide’. Kartsonis prefers ‘handbook’ or ‘manual’, see A. D. Kartsonis, *Anastasis: The Making of an Image* (Princeton, 1986), 41, 59; cf. R. G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton, 1997), 92.

¹⁶⁵ Uthemann places the reworking of the text in the late 680s, but Binggeli has observed several elements in the text that make the early 690s the more likely period. See K.-H. Uthemann (ed.), *Viae Dux*, CCSG 8, ccxvii–ccxviii; Binggeli, ‘Anastase le Sinaïte’, 341–44.

¹⁶⁶ For discussion of content not considered in this paper see S. Griffith, ‘Anastasios of Sinai, the Hodegos, and the Muslims’, *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 32 (1987): 341–58.

¹⁶⁷ Marinides, ‘Lay Piety in Byzantium’, 354.

discussion of Christ's death is unique for how he focuses on the actual dead body of Christ. While the Gospels briefly note how Christ's body was taken down from the cross and put in the tomb after being embalmed, they offer very little detail concerning the state of the corpse.¹⁶⁸

It is likely that Anastasius' experiences with autopsy in the infirmary partly inspired his proclivity for drawing upon the theme of death in debates.¹⁶⁹ But the passion and creativity with which he writes suggests that he had spent considerable time thinking through his arguments. Because we know the importance of μνήμη τοῦ θανάτου for Sinai monasticism, it is possible that Anastasius' use of death in his apologetics was influenced by his own experience and engagement with the remembrance of death. But most important for our purposes is the way in which Anastasius specifically connects his detailed discussions of death to icons.

Before we address Anastasius' use of icons, we must first consider more carefully the overall purpose and scope of the *Hodegos*. A major theme of the *Hodegos* highlights the ease with which mere words can be twisted and distorted – especially by heretics. This phenomenon was especially true towards the end of the seventh century, as indicated by the fact that bishops at the Sixth Ecumenical Council felt the need to check each others' copies of texts being discussed.¹⁷⁰ As a man who was passionate about defending orthodox teaching, one senses that Anastasius was frequently frustrated by the way his opponents would manipulate ecclesiastical texts during their debates. The beginning chapter of *Hodegos* communicates these sentiments in the following passage:

There are two ways of debating. One person argues by written quotes, and the other argues by material productions (πραγματικαὶ παραστάσεων), which is the stronger and more trustworthy way. For quotes of Scripture are also equally able to be corrupted. From this it is to be observed that if you present an example to an opponent, he will also immediately produce another example, both the heretic and Jew. Whence the one who is able to argue by material proofs (πραγματικῶν ἀποδείξεων) is better armoured against opponents.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Jn. 19:38–42; Mt. 27:57–61; Mk. 15:42–47; Lk. 23:50–56.

¹⁶⁹ See 'Introduction' in Munitiz (ed.), *Questions and Answers*, 17.

¹⁷⁰ I. Ševčenko and C. Mango (eds), *Byzantine Books and Bookmen* (Washington, DC, 1975), 29.

¹⁷¹ *Hodegos*, I.2.27–34. Σκοποὶ διαλέξεως εἰσι δύο, ὁ μὲν διὰ γραφικῶν ῥήσεων, ὁ δὲ διὰ πραγματικῶν παραστάσεων, ὅς καὶ ἰσχυρότερος καὶ ἀληθέστερός ἐστι· τὰ μὲν γὰρ ῥήματα τῶν γραφῶν ἴσως καὶ ὑπονοθεύονται. Ὅθεν ἔστιν ἰδέσθαι, ὅτι, [εἰ] χρήσιν προφέρεις τῷ δι' ἐναντίας, κακείνους

This excerpt provides an overarching philosophy for the entire *Hodegos*. Anastasius spends the next ten chapters informing his readers of the basic beliefs and characteristics of heretics so that they will be prepared when they are confronted in an argument. But in Ch.12, Anastasius is finally able to demonstrate how such *πραγματικαὶ παραστάσεις* can be implemented in the heat of debate.¹⁷² He recounts a particular occasion, probably in Alexandria, when he was arguing with a particular group within Monophysitism called the Theopaschites, who believed that Christ's divinity suffered along with his physical body on the cross:

A most excellent rule of the wisest of men says: the material refutations and productions (*πραγματικαὶ ἀντιρρήσεις καὶ παραστάσεις*) are stronger, more faithful, and mightier by far than the verbal words, and biblical quotes. For the material productions (*πραγματικαὶ παραστάσεις*) may in no way be glossed over or tampered with, while the verbal expositions of books often suffer additions and omissions in the hands of heretics... Therefore the heretics and the unfaithful may be better put to utter shame through the use of physical objects (*διὰ πραγμάτων*). Thus, while arguing once more against them about the redeeming Passion and the cross of Christ, we realized by the aim of their arguments that they were trying to prove God the Logos passible and mortal along with his own flesh. So we no longer made use of words, but answered them by means of physical shapes and examples (*πραγματικῶν σχημάτων καὶ ὑποδειγμάτων*) by inscribing on some tablet the crucifixion of the Lord and an inscription, which we will record shortly after giving the (patristic) arguments.¹⁷³

Although Anastasius does not use the term *εἰκόν* to classify the recommended material and physical productions, many factors corroborate the understanding that

εὐθέως ἑτέραν χρῆσιν προφέρει, καὶ ὁ αἰρετικός, καὶ ὁ Ἰουδαῖος· ὅθεν ὁ δυνάμενος διὰ πραγματικῶν ἀποδείξεων μᾶλλον ὀπλιζέσσω πρὸς τοὺς ἐναντίους. This is the author's own translation following the example of Kartsonis in the phrases 'material productions' and 'material proofs'; cf. Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 42–43.

¹⁷² Kartsonis also notes 'material representations' and 'material figurations' as possible translations. See Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 42.

¹⁷³ *Hodegos*, XII.1.1–30. Ὅρος ἄριστος ἀνδρῶν πανσοφωτάτων τυγχάνει λέγων, ὡς αἱ πραγματικαὶ ἀντιρρήσεις καὶ παραστάσεις ἰσχυρότεραι καὶ πιστότεραι καὶ κραταιότεραι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν τυγχάνουσι τῶν ῥηματικῶν λέξεων τε καὶ βιβλιακῶν ῥήσεων. Αἱ μὲν γὰρ πραγματικαὶ παραστάσεις οὐδαμῶς παραγραφῆναι ἢ ῥαδιουργηθῆναι δύνανται· αἱ δὲ ῥηματικαὶ τῶν δέλτων ἐκθέσεις πολλάκις ὑπὸ ἀνδρῶν κακοφρόνων προσθήκας καὶ ὑφαιρέσεις πάσχουσιν... Οὐκοῦν διὰ πραγμάτων μᾶλλον ἰσχυροτέρως καταισχύνονται οἱ αἰρετικοὶ καὶ ἄπιστοι. Διαλεγόμενων γὰρ ἡμῶν πάλιν πρὸς αὐτοὺς περὶ τοῦ σωτηρίου πάθους καὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὡς εἶδομεν αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ σκοποῦ τῶν χρήσεων, ὧν προέφερον, ἀγωνιζομένους παθητὸν δεῖξαι καὶ τὸν θεὸν λόγον καὶ θνητὸν μετὰ τῆς ἰδίας αὐτοῦ σαρκός, οὐκέτι λοιπὸν διὰ ῥημάτων, ἀλλὰ διὰ πραγματικῶν σχημάτων καὶ ὑποδειγμάτων πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἐχρησάμεθα ἐν πυξίῳ τινὶ διαχαράξαντες τὴν τοῦ δεσπότου σταύρωσιν καὶ τινὰ ἐπιγραφὴν, ἣντινα μετὰ τὰς χρήσεις διαγράψομεν. Translation is Kartsonis' with minor adjustments.

wooden panel icons are precisely what he used. First, the word *πυξίῳ* strongly suggests that the image was depicted on a wooden board or panel. Furthermore, Anastasius is quite clear that there is to be an illustration included in the text of the *Hodegos* and instructs the copyist to preserve a specific *τύπον* of the Crucifixion mirroring the icon he used (Fig.6).¹⁷⁴ With this illumination in view of the reader, Anastasius repeatedly explains how he directed the gaze of his interlocutors to the lifeless body of Christ. In fact, based upon Anastasius' several references to the body of Christ in the tomb, Anna Kartsonis argues persuasively that Anastasius used at least two different images in his debates; one of the Crucifixion and one of the Entombment.¹⁷⁵ These icons would not have been readily available for many, which probably explains why Anastasius can only recommend these weapons for 'whoever is able'.¹⁷⁶

Anastasius' dynamic use of icons becomes even more certain when we consider the context in which the theological debates of the time took place. Large crowds of people often gathered to observe these entertaining events, and Anastasius notes that one was staged before the prefect and made available for anyone in the city to observe.¹⁷⁷ The fact that Anastasius used his *πραγματικαὶ παραστάσεων* as 'visual aids' for his opponents and crowds of bystanders suggests that they were probably sturdier than mere illuminations on flimsy sheets of parchment or papyrus.¹⁷⁸ Additionally, we know that these debates were considerably interactive and often involved touch. In one case, Anastasius mentions placing his finger upon the icon of the Crucifixion.¹⁷⁹ At another point he even describes how he grasped the beard of his opponent.¹⁸⁰ Again, these factors virtually necessitate that the *πραγματικαὶ παραστάσεων* consisted of images on substantial pieces of wood. Finally, because Anastasius so strongly opposes the value of written words, it makes sense that the

¹⁷⁴ Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 44. The surviving MSS of *Hodegos* include several varying illuminations of this *τύπον*, and some contain no image at all. Nonetheless, this author concurs with Kartsonis (arguing from an art-historical perspective) and Uthemann (arguing from the perspective of textual transmission) that the archetype featured a detailed depiction of Christ dead on the cross. For a detailed discussion of the MSS variants see Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 45–51.

¹⁷⁵ Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 52–56.

¹⁷⁶ See *Hodegos*, I.2.27–34, above. Cf. Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 43.

¹⁷⁷ *Hodegos*, X.3.

¹⁷⁸ Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 44.

¹⁷⁹ *Hodegos*, XII.3.1–12. Ὡς γὰρ προεῖπον, ἐν πυξίῳ τινὶ τὸν τίμιον τὴν τοῦ δεσπότης σταύρωσιν μετὰ καὶ ἐπιγραφῆς τινος ἐξετυπώσαμεν καὶ τὸν δάκτυλον ἐπιτιθεντες διηρωτῶμεν αὐτούς. Cf. Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 44.

¹⁸⁰ *Hodegos*, X.3.

πραγματικαὶ παραστάσεις he endorses would be more robust than the pages of florilegium (which could easily be ripped out). To quote Kartsonis, Anastasius ‘insists on the material reality and tangibility of his visual weapons’.¹⁸¹ It is with such tangible icons in mind that we should read the following passage:

In the likeness of dead men God became truly a corpse in the flesh. In the likeness of man he was laid in the grave. And *we saw him* (εἶδομεν) lying dead full of divinity, divorced from the soul, the body truly dead, soulless, soundless, breathless, speechless, motionless, sightless, unable to move, unable to teach, unable to feel, just the body of God truly dead like all corpses. And upon seeing this vision and mighty sight of the deadness of God’s body *we were stupefied* (ἐξεθαμβήθημεν). And getting back to those words, which the heretics think they (can) utter against us, we questioned them perplexed while *observing intently* (ἀτενίζοντες) the all holy body of Christ... “If upon deification the body of Christ became divinity, too, how (is it possible) it does not watch and see as the divinity which watches everything, but the body, which has in itself the light that enlightens every man, has the eye(s) closed?” [emphasis added].¹⁸²

Anastasius is not pretending to have observed the actual body of Christ, but is describing how the icon at hand (probably depicting the Entombment) was being continually pointed to and used as an example. The plural verbs used to describe the visual perception of Christ’s body (italicised) are especially valuable in this regard. Together they indicate that the image of Christ’s body was being observed by a number of people, and the participle ἀτενίζοντες especially suggests that serious thought was being spent upon the depiction. Furthermore, the image must have been detailed enough to evoke fear (ἐξεθαμβήθημεν) and also clearly show that Christ’s eyes were closed. All this evidence proves that ‘The Crucifixion and the Entombment are not simply illustrations of the corresponding polemical text, but the core material around which the Orthodox defence is constructed.’¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 50.

¹⁸² *Hodegos*, XIII.9.29–68. Τότε ἀληθῶς ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων νεκρῶν νεκρὸς σαρκὶ ὁ θεὸς γέγονεν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπου ἐν τάφῳ κατετέθη, καὶ εἶδομεν αὐτὸν νεκρὸν κείμενον, ἔνθεον, κεχωρισμένον ψυχῆς, σῶμα νεκρὸν ἀληθῶς, ἄψυχον, ἄλαλον, ἄπνουν, μὴ λαλοῦν, μὴ κινούμενον, μὴ ὀρῶντα, μὴ μεθιστάμενον, μὴ διδάσκοντα, μὴ αἰσθανόμενον, ἀλλὰ νεκρὸν ἀληθῶς σῶμα θεοῦ, ὡς πάντες νεκροί. Καὶ ἰδόντες τὸ ὄραμα καὶ θέαμα τὸ μέγα τοῦτο τῆς θεοσώμου νεκρώσεως ἐξεθαμβήθημεν· καὶ ἀναλαβόντες τὰς ποιετημένας φωνάς, ἃς καθ’ ἡμῶν προφέρειν νομίζουσιν οἱ αἰρετικοί, ἀτενίζοντες τῷ παναγίῳ Χριστοῦ σώματι πρὸς αὐτοὺς διαποροῦντες εἶπομεν... Εἰ γέγονε τῇ θεώσει καὶ τὸ σῶμα Χριστοῦ θεότης, πῶς οὐ θεωρεῖ καὶ βλέπει ὡς ἡ θεότης ἢ τὰ πάντα θεωροῦσα, ἀλλὰ κεκλεισμένον ἔχει τὸ ὄμμα τὸ σῶμα τὸ ἔχον ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸ φῶς τὸ φωτίζον πάντα ἄνθρωπον; Cf. Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 53–54.

¹⁸³ Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 57.

To call Anastasius' implementation of icons 'didactic' would not be accurate. The above passages make clear that the images were evoking more emotion than they were bestowing knowledge. This is not to deny that certain iconography at this time served a didactic role, but rather to emphasise that this was not the primary role of icons within monasticism. After all, monks would have been among the best equipped in all the empire to learn through reading, and so would have had little use for learning key stories (such as the gospel narratives) through imagery.

If Anastasius' use of icons in *Hodegos* cannot be called didactic, perhaps the best adjective is 'emotive'. Such a description would fit well with the stories already observed from his *Tales*. Most importantly, the fact that Anastasius links the meditation upon death to the careful observation of icons strengthens the possibility that other monks used icons as an aid for their practice of μνήμη τοῦ θανάτου.

To summarise, Anastasius exhibits many important views for our consideration of iconography in monastic settings. By glorifying the intercessory and miraculous roles of advanced ascetics, he seems to validate the legitimacy of seeking them out for spiritual enrichment and fulfilment. Although he is mostly silent concerning icons in *Tales I*, he provides his monastic readers with perhaps the ideal role of icons in *Hodegos*, where he contends that icons be used as polemical tools to specifically accentuate the theme of Christ's death against various types of Monophysites.

Chapter 3

Imperial Perceptions of Iconography

The *Acts* of the Quinisext Council provide the first official statements concerning images in the Byzantine Empire.¹⁸⁴ Although this fact has been recognized by nearly every scholar of art history, we believe new information can still be gleaned from this documentary source. This will be accomplished by comparing the *Acts* of the Quinisext to both literary and material evidence of the same period. In the process, we hope to demonstrate that the specific eschatological paradigm of the imperial authorities in Constantinople drastically affected what they considered as acceptable iconography.

It is important to explain our usage of the term ‘imperial’ throughout this chapter. Justinian II is obviously involved, but despite the important role he played at the Quinisext Council, he cannot really be credited with the ideological and theological underpinnings of its proceedings. Rather, it was the bishops from across the empire who determined what would be decreed. Based upon several canons addressing churches in frontier zones, it becomes evident that the bishops in attendance were politically, geographically, and especially eschatologically invested in the empire.¹⁸⁵ It is with this holistic sense of the empire that we use the word ‘imperial’. This understanding will be vital for considering how an eschatology involving the triumphant Roman Empire may have affected what iconography the imperial authorities endorsed.

Images at the Quinisext Council

The Quinisext Council cannot be understood correctly without a keen knowledge of contemporary issues throughout the empire. The loss of Egypt and Syria-Palestine to the Arabs in the 630s had seriously diminished the empire’s tax revenues and territorial reach,

¹⁸⁴ Because it was held in the domed hall of the imperial palace in Constantinople, the Quinisext Council is alternatively known as the Council in Trullo. Despite the fact that the term ‘Quinisext’ is a twelfth-century neologism, we have chosen to use it here because it aligns with the tradition of assigning ordinal names to the councils that were ecumenical. The ecumenical status of the Quinisext is a matter of much disagreement, but we view it as such from the perspective of the assembly at Constantinople rather than its reception in Rome. See G. Nedungatt and M. Featherstone (eds), *The Council in Trullo Revisited* (Roma, 1995), 7–12.

¹⁸⁵ *Acts*, C.8 (79–80), C.18 (93–95), C.37 (115–116), C.39 (117–118).

but the defeat of the Arab forces in 678 after a four-year siege had given Byzantium a new breath of vitality.¹⁸⁶ In line with this new optimism, Constantine IV had convened the Sixth Ecumenical Council and delivered a new ‘package’ of imperial ideology.¹⁸⁷ Following in his father’s footsteps, Justinian II sought to lead a unified empire as a bold and daring emperor.

The most common interpretation of Muslim military success was that Byzantium itself was being punished by God for moral failure.¹⁸⁸ Because the Fifth and Sixth Ecumenical Councils had neglected to provide any disciplinary canons, Justinian II convened the Quinisext in order to remedy this void and pioneer a program of ‘cleansing and purgation’.¹⁸⁹ The disciplinary canons of the Quinisext were quickly integrated into Byzantine Law, resulting in a rich MS tradition with ‘no less than 218’ surviving MSS.¹⁹⁰ Owing to the many MSS and Heinz Ohme’s excellent critical edition, we have little cause to be sceptical of the *Acts*, which features an introduction, 102 canons, and a list of bishops’ signatures.¹⁹¹ The προσφωνητικός λόγος (introduction) is described as an address from the assembled bishops to the emperor, but was probably a ‘creation of the court’.¹⁹² The 102 canons (the first two of which are an extension of the προσφωνητικός λόγος), are grouped under three headings: ‘Concerning priests and clerics’, ‘Concerning monks and nuns’, and ‘Concerning laymen’.¹⁹³ Within these general groups, small units of canons are sometimes clustered around a related topic, most often in couplets.¹⁹⁴ Thus, we are able to discern a certain degree of the flow of thought and discussion during the council.

¹⁸⁶ For the impact of territorial loss to the Arabs see M. Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600–1025* (London, 1996), 89.

¹⁸⁷ M. Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era, c.680–850* (Oxford, 2015), 41.

¹⁸⁸ Haldon, ‘The Works of Anastasius’, 115–16.

¹⁸⁹ Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology*, 57.

¹⁹⁰ H. Ohme, R. Flogaus, and C. R. Kraus, (eds), *Concilium Constantinopolitanum Anno 691/2 in Trullo Habitum (Concilium Quinisextum)*, ACO vol.II.2.4 (Berlin, 2013), IX.

¹⁹¹ Not all the MSS feature the ‘bishops list’, which has been the subject of considerable discussion. Ibid.; H. Ohme, *Das Concilium Quinisextum und Seine Bischofsliste: Studien zum Konstantinopeler Konzil von 692*, Arbeiten Zur Kirchengeschichte, vol. 56 (Berlin, 1990).

¹⁹² Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology*, 47; Marinides, ‘Lay Piety in Byzantium’, 407.

¹⁹³ Nedungatt and Featherstone, *Trullo Revisited*, 69, 119, 132.

¹⁹⁴ These include: marriage and sexual relations (Cs.3–6), conducting business (Cs.9–11), ordination (Cs.12–16), clerics leaving their church (Cs.17–18), preaching and instruction (Cs.19–20), serving the church for material gain (Cs.22–23), the Eucharist (Cs.28–29, 31–32), barbarian incursions

In this regard, it is vital to note that the three canons concerning images (Cs.73, 82, 100) are *not* grouped together or near each other, although scholars have often tended to speak of them as if they are.¹⁹⁵ This fact amply corroborates our critique of Kitzinger's model in Ch.1: these three canons reveal that images may have been increasing in *quantity*, but the lack of unity in the issues addressed in these canons demonstrates the variety of perspectives concerning images in the late seventh century. In other words, the bishops did not recognise any problem with images in general, nor with any 'surge in the powers of sacred portraiture'.¹⁹⁶ Rather, they addressed each individual iconographic problem independently. A case in point is C.73, in which the decree against crosses on church floors was delivered during a broader conversation on church buildings.¹⁹⁷ Bearing this context in mind, we now turn to the three widely recognised iconographic canons of the Quinisext Council.

First, we quote C.100 in full, which seems to address secular images that fell outside the realm of veneration:

Wisdom commands: Let your eyes look directly forward and keep your heart with all vigilance; for the sensations of the body all too easily influence the soul. Therefore, we command that henceforth absolutely no pictures (γραφάς) should be drawn which enchant the eyes, be they on panels (πίναξιν) or set forth in any other wise, corrupting the mind and inciting the flames of shameful pleasures. If anyone dares to do this, he shall be excommunicated.¹⁹⁸

A few things can be noted here. The usage of γραφάς instead of εικῶν or τύπος is probably not significant. However, the fact that the term πίναξιν is used is interesting because it strongly suggests that problems were occurring in connection with portable wooden paintings. While there are extant nudes from this period in mosaic form that could have incited 'shameful pleasures', we possess no similar images on wooden panels from this

(Cs.37–39), beginning the ascetic life (Cs.40–45), monasteries (Cs.45–49), kinship and marriage (Cs.53–54), fasting (Cs.55–56), church buildings (Cs.73–75), and adultery (Cs.86–87).

¹⁹⁵ Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 58.

¹⁹⁶ Brubaker and Haldon, *The Iconoclast Era*, 779.

¹⁹⁷ See *Acts*, Cs.73–75 (155–57).

¹⁹⁸ *Acts*, C.100 (180–81): 'Οἱ ὀφθαλμοί σου ὀρθὰ βλέπτωσαν,' καί, 'πάση φθλακῇ τήρει σὴν καρδίαν,' ἡ Σοφία διακελεύεται· ῥαδίως γὰρ τὰ ἐαυτῶν ἐπὶ τὴν ψυχὴν αἱ τοῦ σώματος αἰσθήσεις εἰσκρίνουσι. Τὰς οὖν τὴν ὄρασιν καταγοητευούσας γραφάς, εἴτε ἐν πίναξιν, εἴτε ἄλλως πῶς ἀνατεθειμένας, καὶ τὸν νοῦν διαφθειρούσας καὶ κινούσας πρὸς τὰ τῶν αἰσchrῶν ἡδονῶν ὑπεκκαύματα, οὐδαμῶς ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν οἰωδῆποτε τρόπῳ προστάσσομεν ἐγγράττεσθαι. Εἰ δέ τις τοῦτο πράττειν ἐπιχειρήσῃ, ἀφορίζεσθω.

period.¹⁹⁹ Further consideration of this canon lies beyond the remit of this paper, but one could hypothesise that production of such panels was drastically curbed, especially since lust is a universal sin in no need of complex theological explanation.

The next portion of the Quinisext that has attracted scholars of Iconoclasm is C.73:

The life-giving cross has shown us salvation, and we ought with all diligence to render fitting honour to that through which we have been saved from the ancient fall. Wherefore, paying reverence (προσκύνησιν) to it in mind and word and sentiment, we command that signs (τύπους) of the cross which have been set into the floor by certain persons should be erased completely, in order that the trophy of our victory may not be insulted by the trampling feet of those who walk upon it. We decree, therefore, that those who henceforth set the sign of the cross into the floor should be excommunicated.²⁰⁰

This canon contains an interesting mixture of contemporary ideas. We noted the importance of προσκύνησιν before images in Ch.1, but the fact that it is here carried out ‘in mind and word and sentiment’ is an unusual variation, and may reflect a measured caution against idolatrous language. In order to understand the significance of the cross at this time, we must recall the legacy of the Heraclian Dynasty, of which Justinian II was the last reigning emperor. While the importance of the cross to the Roman Empire was often traced back to Constantine’s vision on the Milvian Bridge, its role in imperial propaganda was dramatically rejuvenated when Heraclius repossessed the True Cross from Persia in 628.²⁰¹ From that point forward, it was prominently featured in Heraclian propaganda, effectively replacing the Νίκη-type angel as the preferred sign of victory.²⁰² This is made explicit in C.82 by the description of the cross as ‘the trophy of our victory’. Ultimately, C.73 reveals that enough people were walking on images of the cross to evoke a ruling at the Quinisext,

¹⁹⁹ Consider, for instance, the Church of St. George in Madaba and the Quṣayr ‘Amra in Jordan. Cf. G. Fowden, *Quṣayr ‘Amra: Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage, vol. 36 (Berkeley, 2004), 75–77.

²⁰⁰ *Acts*, C.73 (155): Τοῦ ζωοποιοῦ σταυροῦ δείξαντος ἡμῖν τὸ σωτήριον, πᾶσαν σπουδὴν ἡμᾶς τιθεῖναι χρή, τοῦ τιμῆν τὴν ἀξίαν ἀποδιδόναι τῷ δι’ οὗ σεσῶσμεθα τοῦ παλαιοῦ παραπτώματος. Ὅθεν καὶ νῦν καὶ λόγῳ καὶ αἰσθήσει τὴν προσκύνησιν αὐτῷ ἀπονέμοντες, τοὺς ἐν τῷ ἐδάφει τοῦ σταυροῦ τύπους ὑπὸ τινῶν κατασκευαζομένους ἐξαφανίζεσθαι παντοίως προστάσσομεν, ὥς ἂν μὴ τῇ τῶν βαδιζόντων καταπατήσει τὸ τῆς νίκης ἡμῖν τρόπαιον ἐφυβρίζοιτο. Τοὺς οὖν ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν τοῦ σταυροῦ τύπον ἐπὶ ἐδάφους κατασκευάζοντας ὀρίζομεν ἀφορίζεσθαι.

²⁰¹ George of Pisidia, *In restitutionem Sanctae Crucis*.

²⁰² P. Grierson and A. R. Bellinger, (eds), *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and the Whittemore Collection, Vol 2: Phocas-Theodosius III 602–717 AD*, vol. 2, Part 1 (Washington, DC, 1968), 67, 94.

which may indicate that lay and clerical views regarding this particular iconographic symbol were not in harmony.

Last, and most importantly, the words of the Quinisext Council that have most intrigued art historians are found in C.82:

In some depictions of the venerable images (σεπτῶν εικόνων), a lamb (ἄμνός) is portrayed to which the Forerunner points his finger, and this has been accepted as a representation of grace, prefiguring for us through the law the true Lamb, Christ our God. Venerating, then, these ancient representations and foreshadowings as symbols and prefigurations of truth handed down by the Church, nevertheless, we prefer grace and truth, which we have received as fulfilment of the law. Therefore, in order that what is perfect, even in paintings, may be portrayed before the eyes of all, we decree that henceforth the figure of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, Christ our God, should be set forth in images in human form, instead of the ancient lamb; for in this way we apprehend the depth of the humility of the Word of God, and are led to the remembrance of his life in the flesh, his passion and his saving death, and of the redemption which thereby came to the world.²⁰³

Most commentators have interpreted this canon quite uncritically as a *sequitur* of the recent affirmation of Christ's two natures at the Sixth Ecumenical Council, but two components require further investigation: the lamb and the Forerunner. The *Liber Pontificalis* makes clear that the tomes of the Quinisext found strong disapproval with Pope Sergius (687–701) in Rome, which eventually motivated Justinian's attempt to kidnap him.²⁰⁴ Scholars have long debated what might have precipitated the disapproval from Rome, and some have argued that C.82 caused special offence by making lamb imagery obsolete.²⁰⁵ This theory is supported by the fact that Pope Sergius added the

²⁰³ English translation with minor adjustment from *Trullo Revisited*, 162–64. Ἐν τισι τῶν σεπτῶν εικόνων γραφαῖς ἄμνός δακτύλῳ τοῦ Προδρόμου δεικνύμενος ἐγχαράττεται, ὃς εἰς τύπον παρελήφθη τῆς χάριτος, τὸν ἀληθινὸν ἡμῖν διὰ νόμου τροῦποφαίνων ἄμνόν, Χριστὸν τὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν. Τοὺς οὖν παλαιούς τύπους καὶ τὰς σκιὰς ὡς τῆς ἀληθείας σύμβολά τε καὶ προχαράγματα τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ παραδεδομένους κατασπαζόμενοι, τὴν χάριν προτιμῶμεν καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ὡς πλήρωμα νόμου ταύτην ὑποδεξάμενοι. Ὡς ἂν οὖν τὸ τέλειον κὰν ταῖς χρωματουργίαις ἐν ταῖς ἀπάντων ὄψεσιν ὑπογράφηται, τὸν τοῦ αἵροντος τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου ἄμνοῦ, Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, κατὰ τὸν ἀνθρώπινον χαρακτήρα καὶ ἐν ταῖς εἰκόσιν ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν, ἀντὶ τοῦ παλαιοῦ ἄμνοῦ, ἀναστηλοῦσθαι ὀρίζομεν, δι' αὐτοῦ τὸ τῆς ταπεινώσεως ὕψος τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου κατανοοῦντες, καὶ πρὸς μνήμην τῆς ἐν σαρκὶ πολιτείας, τοῦ τε πάθους αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ σωτηρίου θανάτου χειραγωγούμενοι, καὶ τῆς ἐντεῦθεν γενομένης τῷ κόσμῳ ἀπολυτρώσεως.

²⁰⁴ *LP*, 1:372–74 (80–85).

²⁰⁵ C. Head, *Justinian II of Byzantium* (Madison, 1972), 77; cf. J. Herrin, 'The Quinisext Council (692) as a Continuation of Chalcedon', in R. Price and M. Whitby (eds), *Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils 400–700* (Liverpool, 2009), 148–68; H. Ohme, 'Sources of the Greek Canon Law to

singing of the ‘*Agnus Dei*’ to the Eucharistic liturgy and seems to have held a special preference for lamb imagery.²⁰⁶ If C.82 did, in fact, offend Sergius, the council was apparently unaware, for they were careful to acknowledge when they broke with Roman practice.²⁰⁷ In fact, as Michael Humphreys has pointed out, the whole spirit of the Quinisext exudes a robust effort to be perceived as ecumenical.²⁰⁸ Nonetheless, a lack of intention from Constantinople does not negate the possibility of offence in Rome, and in the last section of this chapter we will consider the possible eschatological dynamics of lamb imagery that may have augmented Sergius’ disapproval.

From an iconographic viewpoint, the inclusion of the Forerunner is far more important and somewhat curious. In the above excerpt we have made a rare departure from the translation of Nedungatt and Featherstone, who make the Forerunner the subject of the first clause, when the focus is clearly on the lamb.²⁰⁹ This causes one to wonder why the Forerunner was included in the canon at all. Invariably, scholars have pointed to the Throne of Maximian (Fig.7) as an artefact depicting the scene described in C.82, and to our knowledge this is the only extant example of such a scene from this period.²¹⁰ Far more common are images of solitary lambs representing Christ – especially in the West. While it is possible that all images of the Forerunner and lamb together were destroyed, it seems unlikely that anyone would have taken the decree so literally as to leave images of solitary lambs intact. Thus, we are faced with a vexing binary question: if the primary problem was with lamb imagery itself, why did the council mention the Forerunner and why did images of lambs remain so popular in the West? We must set this dilemma aside for now, but will attempt to answer it with the aid of iconographic evidence in the last section below.

Having considered the most discussed portions of the Quinisext, we now draw attention to an additional canon that is not typically recognised as possessing iconographic weight. It reads as follows:

the Quinisext Council (691/2): Councils and Church Fathers’, in W. Hartmann and K. Pennington (eds), *The History of Byzantine and Eastern Canon Law to 1500* (Washington, DC, 2012), 24–114.

²⁰⁶ *LP*, 1:372 (84): Hic statuit ut tempore confractionis dominici corporis *Agnus Dei*, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis a clero et populo decantetur.

²⁰⁷ *Acts*, Cs.3 (69–74), 13 (84–87), 36 (114), 55 (136–37).

²⁰⁸ Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology*, 74.

²⁰⁹ Nedungatt and Featherstone’s translation reads: ‘In some depictions of the venerable images, the Forerunner is portrayed pointing with his finger to a lamb.’ *Trullo Revisited*, 162–63.

²¹⁰ Cormack, *Writing in Gold*, 100–101.

In the case of so-called eremites who go about the cities clad in black and with long hair, associating with men and women and making a mockery of their profession, we decree that, if thy choose to receive the tonsure and assume the habit of other monks, they should be placed in a monastery; but if they choose not to do this, they should be driven from the cities altogether and should dwell in the desert, from whence they have fabricated their appellation.²¹¹

The standard and recognisable image of these eremites ‘clad in black and with long hair’ reflects the impressive status of ‘living icons’ in the Sinai Peninsula that we discussed in Ch.2. Judging from the corpus of Anastasius, the social and political displacements of the period had created an environment in which much change and disruption was occurring.²¹² Several canons of the Quinisext discuss particular problems related to ‘barbarian incursions’, and the subsequent dislocation of populations may have contributed to the problem of C.42.²¹³ Whatever the precise cause of hermits’ increased appearances in cities, it is clear that the bishops of the council viewed them as renegade figures who were an embarrassment to clerics and solicited ‘vain glory’ from common laypeople.²¹⁴ Furthermore, several canons deliberate the increasing frequency of people wishing to pursue the ascetic lifestyle and enforce multiple regulations in order to restrict the process.²¹⁵ Based upon the fame and dignity usually directed towards ascetics, which we considered in the last chapter, it is entirely possible that the bishops at the council were feeling jealousy towards the eremites.

This possibility takes on additional significance when we consider the importance of physical appearance at the Quinisext. C.27, for instance, forbids the wearing of ‘improper clothes’ by the clergy, even when traveling.²¹⁶ Multiple canons discuss the importance of the tonsure for clerics, but C.21 implies that the hairstyles of laypeople were limited by decorum as well:

²¹¹ *Acts*, C.42 (124): Τοὺς λεγομένους ἐρημίτας, οἵτινες μελανειμονοῦντες καὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς κομῶντες περιάγουσι τὰς πόλεις, μεταξὺ ἀνδρῶν λαϊκῶν καὶ γυναικῶν ἀναστρεφόμενοι, καὶ τὸ οἰκεῖον ἐπάγγελμα καθυβρίζοντες, ὀρίζομεν, εἰ μὲν αἰροῦνται τὰς κόμας ἀποκειράμενοι τὸ τῶν λοιπῶν μοναχῶν ἀναδέξασθαι σχῆμα, τοὺτους ἐν μοναστηρίῳ ἐγκαθίστασθαι καὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐγκαταλέγεσθαι· εἰ δὲ μὴ τοῦτο προέλουντο, παντάπασιν αὐτοὺς τῶν πόλεων ἀπελαύνεσθαι καὶ τὰς ἐρήμους οἰκεῖν, ἐξ ὧν καὶ τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἑαυτοῖς ἀναπλάσαντο.

²¹² Haldon, ‘The Works of Anastasius’; J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture*, Revised edn (Cambridge, 1997), 92–172.

²¹³ *Acts*, C.8 (79–80), C.18 (93–95), C.37 (115–116), C.39 (117–118).

²¹⁴ *Acts*, C.41 (121–23).

²¹⁵ *Acts*, Cs.40–45 (119–128).

²¹⁶ *Acts*, C.27 (102).

If of their own will they see to their reform, rejecting the sin through which they have fallen away from grace and freeing themselves completely from it, then they shall be retonsured as clerics. But if they do not choose this of their own accord, they shall *grow their hair as laymen*, inasmuch as they have preferred living in the world to the life in heaven [emphasis added].²¹⁷

Finally, the etiquette for the hairstyles of laypeople is confirmed in C.96:

In the case of those men, therefore, who to the detriment of those who see them arrange the hair on their head in elaborate plaits, offering allurements to unstable souls, we shall treat them paternally, with an appropriate penalty, educating them and teaching them to live prudently.²¹⁸

C.96 also mentions the importance of adorning the ‘inner man’ rather than the ‘outer man’, which could be another jab at the eremites, who would not be associating with women if their ‘inner man’ matched the appearance of their ‘outer man’. Put simply, clerics could not grow their hair as laymen, laymen could not grow their hair as clerics, and long hair was frowned upon for all males.

Extant icons seem to confirm the potency of appearance in Byzantium and especially the indelible ‘image’ of long hair. Elijah and John the Baptist – perhaps the most famous desert-dwellers of the Old and New Testaments, respectively – were both universally depicted with long hair. Two icons (Figs.8–9) and two mosaics at Saint Catherine’s Monastery (Fig.10) prove that these types were well-established by the time of the Quinisext.²¹⁹ If our deductions here and in Ch.2 have been correct, it is possible that C.42 denotes the beginning of a fissure between monastic and imperial perspectives concerning spiritual maturity and authority. Even if this disagreement never reached a climax, it is easy to see how varying opinions of appearance and authority may have

²¹⁷ *Acts*, C.21 (96–97): εἰ μὲν ἐκουσίως πρὸς ἐπιστροφὴν ὁρῶντες ἀθετοῦσι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, δι’ ἧς τῆς χάριτος ἐκπεπτώκασι, καὶ ταύτης τέλεον ἀλλοτρίους ἑαυτοὺς καθιστῶσι, τῷ τοῦ κληρικοῦ κειρέσθωσαν σχήματι· εἰ δὲ μὴ τοῦτο αὐθαίρετως αἰρήσονται, καθάπερ οἱ λαϊκοὶ τὴν κόμην ἐπιτρεφέτωσαν, ὡς τὴν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἀναστροφὴν τῆς οὐρανίου ζωῆς προτιμήσαντες. Cf. C.33; *Trullo Revisited*, 110–111.

²¹⁸ *Acts*, C.96 (177–78): Τοὺς οὖν τὰς ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ τρίχας πρὸς λύμην τῶν ὁρώντων ἐν ἐπινοίαις ἐμπλοκῆς εὐθετίζοντας καὶ διασκευάζοντας, καὶ δέλεαρ προτιθέντας ἐντεῦθεν ταῖς ἀστηρίκτοις ψυχαῖς, ἐπιτιμίῳ προσφόρῳ πατρικῶς θεραπεύομεν, παιδαγωγοῦντες αὐτοὺς, καὶ σωφρόνως βιοῦν ἐκδιδάσκοντες...

²¹⁹ See icons B.11 and B.17 in Weitzmann, *The Icons*, 32–35, 42–43; cf. depiction of John and Elijah in the Sinai apse mosaic in G. H. Forsyth and K. Weitzmann, ‘Introduction to the Mosaics and Monumental Paintings’, in K. Weitzmann (ed.), *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Church and Fortress of Justinian*. (Ann Arbor, 1973), pls. CVI and CXLII.

influenced the ways in which laypeople and clergy viewed existing images of figures such as Elijah and John the Baptist.

Justinian II (685–695, 705–711)

Sometimes referred to in sources as ὁ Ῥινόμητος (the cut-nosed) due to his mutilation in 695, Justinian II is certainly a fascinating figure. Despite Constance Head's effort to paint him in a 'more balanced light', he remains a man remembered for his violence.²²⁰ He was born in 668 and quite possibly witnessed battles during the Arab siege of Constantinople (674–78) 'from the sea walls of the city' as a young boy.²²¹ The Muslim forces would remain a serious threat throughout both of Justinian's reigns, and with the added troubles in the Balkans from the Bulgars and Slavs, Justinian found himself ruling the empire in a time of chaos seldom seen before.

In this context, it is no surprise that the Quinisext goes to such lengths to cast Justinian in the role of a strong, virtuous leader at such 'a vital moment of moral reformation'.²²² One section of the προσφωνητικός λόγος capitalises on Justinian's strong personality by comparing him to the Old Testament character, Phinehas:

In the fervour of your desire for God you have surpassed the zealot Phinehas and have transfixed sin with the power of your piety and understanding, and you have chosen to lead your flock (ποιμνιον) away from iniquity and corruption.²²³

This is quite a brilliant employment of Scripture because it takes advantage of Justinian's aggressive personality while simultaneously highlighting his role as an agent of purification. The assembled bishops went even farther, however, by casting Justinian as a shepherd and thus linking him to Christ, the true Shepherd:

But, unlike the other four ecumenical councils, these two drew up no sacred canons through which the people might desist from their less noble and lowly conduct, and might be brought to a better and loftier life; and thence it follows that the holy nation, the royal priesthood, on whose behalf Christ died, is torn asunder and led astray through the many passions resulting from indiscipline, and is detached little by little and cut off from the divine fold, having slipped away from the

²²⁰ Head, *Justinian II*, x.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

²²² Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology*, 48.

²²³ *Acts*, Logos (50–51): ὃς τῷ θερμῷ τοῦ πρὸς θεὸν πόθου τὸν ζηλωτὴν ὑπερβαλὼν Φινεὲς καὶ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκκεντήσας τῷ κράτει τῆς εὐσεβείας τε καὶ συνέσεως, καὶ τὸ ποιμνιον τῆς κακίας τε καὶ φθορᾶς συνεξέλεσθαι προεῖλου. Cf. Num. 25:7,11.

achievements of virtue through ignorance and neglect; in the words of the Apostle: They have spurned the Son of God, profaned the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace. It was your great desire, therefore, after the example of Christ, the good Shepherd, searching for the sheep (πρόβατον) lost in the mountains, to bring together this holy nation, as a special people, and to return it to the fold and convince it to keep the divine commandments and statutes, through which we desist from dead deeds and are given life.²²⁴

Humphreys keenly observes that this detailed metaphor is the ‘the first extant application of Christ the Shepherd imagery to any Roman or post-Roman ruler in legal literature’.²²⁵ Considering the fact that C.82 was also a novel deliberation, it is logical that its pastoral imagery may have been related to Justinian’s role as shepherd. In the Bible, pastoral imagery is characteristically paradoxical. Jesus is not only the great Shepherd, but also the sinless Lamb.²²⁶ As a perfect sacrificial lamb, he provides vicarious purification by embodying the inherent frailty of humanity, which is commonly compared with weak and helpless sheep.²²⁷ Grafting Justinian into the paradigm may have encouraged the bishops to simplify the theology so that Christ was clearly linked with Justinian as a shepherd and could not be confused as one of the sheep whom Justinian must lead. Consequently, Christ’s paradoxical role involving both purification (as the ‘Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world’) and redemption (as the Shepherd who rescues lost sheep) was reduced to one of strictly redemption.

This can be supported by another striking innovation of Justinian’s reign. Sometime in the early 690s, Justinian issued the first ever gold solidi to feature Christ’s

²²⁴ *Acts*, Logos (51–53): οὐδαμῶς ἱεροὺς κανόνας ἐνέγραψαν, καθάπερ αἱ λοιπαὶ ἁγίαι τέσσαρες καὶ οἰκουμενικαὶ σύνοδοι, δι’ ὧν ἀποστήσονται οἱ λαοὶ τῆς χειρόνος καὶ ταπεινότερας διαγωγῆς, ἐπὶ δὲ τὸν κρείττονα καὶ ὑψηλότερον μεταθῶνται βίον· ἐντεῦθεν τε τὸ ἔθνος τὸ ἅγιον, τὸ βασιλεῖον ἱεράτευμα, ὑπὲρ οὗ Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν, ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἐξ ἀταξίας παθῶν διασπώμενον καὶ ὑποσυρόμενον, καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν τῆς θείας μάνδρας ἀπορραγὲν καὶ κιατηθὲν καὶ τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ καὶ λήθῃ τῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς κατορθωμάτων ἀπολισθῆσαν, καί, ἀποστολικῶς εἰπεῖν, ‘τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καταπατήσαν καὶ τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης, ἐν ᾧ ἡγιάσθη, κοινὸν ἡγησάμενον, τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἐνύβρισε χάριν·’ τοῦτο λῖαν, ὡς περιούσιον λαόν, ἐπισυναγαγεῖν βουλευθεῖς, μιμήσει τοῦ τὸ πλανώμενον πρόβατον ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος ἐπιζητοῦντος ποιμένος Χριστοῦ, καὶ τῇ αὐτοῦ προσκαταστήσῃ αὐλῇ, καὶ πείσαι φυλάττειν τὰς ἐντολάς τε καὶ τὰ θεῖα προστάγματα, δι’ ὧν τῶν νεκρῶν ἀποχωροῦντες ἔργων ζωοποιούμεθα· Cf. Heb. 10:29.

²²⁵ Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology*, 50.

²²⁶ See especially Jn. 10.

²²⁷ For Christians as sheep see Ex. 34:31; Lk. 15. For Christ as the spotless lamb see Ex. 12:5; 1 Pet. 1:19.

portrait on the obverse (Fig.11).²²⁸ As important as the cross was for the Heraclian dynasty, the intimate connection between the emperor and Christ was ultimate for Justinian. This is indicated by the subtle shift in the inscription above Christ's bust in Justinian's new solidi, which read '*Rex Regantium*'. As James Breckenridge describes, this description located Christ in relationship to other kings; it asserts that Christ 'rules through the rulers of the earth, rather than directly over each individual human being.'²²⁹ Although this new hierarchy of authority fit well within the Neo-Platonic spiritual heritage of Christianity, Justinian's novel responsibility as a shepherd shifted the dynamic and paradoxical role of Christ. Again, it would be problematic for Christ to continue being depicted as a lamb if Justinian were to be successfully cast in the role of Christ's viceregent.

The change in Christ's portrait on Justinian's coins after his return to power in 705 continues to perplex scholars as no contemporary Byzantine author mentions it.²³⁰ Breckenridge suggested that the new portrait of Christ with short, curly hair (Fig.12) was connected to the Camuliana image, which was housed in Constantinople at the time, and therefore was intended to act as some sort of palladian device.²³¹ We are unable to comment on the second type of Christ on Justinian's coins, but can offer a hypothesis suggesting one factor that may have motivated the departure from first image of Christ. Due to the controversial nature of long hair and its association with rebellious ascetics, it is at least possible that Justinian wished to further clarify or delimit the appearance of persons of true spiritual authority. Of course, this is largely conjecture, but the fact that Christ himself spent forty days in the desert and was often at odds with the religious and political authorities of his day could have provided grounds for ascetic identification with the long-haired portrait of Christ.

In conclusion, we can surmise that Justinian II and the bishops assembled at the Quinisext Council were invested in multiple metaphors for the propagation of their imperial vision and that these metaphors derivatively affected the role iconography was

²²⁸ J. D. Breckenridge, *Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II: 685–695, 705–711* (New York, 1959).

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

²³⁰ Cormack, *Writing in Gold*, 98.

²³¹ Breckenridge, *Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II*, 100; Constance Head discusses the possible affinity of Justinian II to the cult of Saint Demeterius, which may support his predilection for relics and palladia. See Head, *Justinian II*, 38–40.

allowed to fill. Specifically, imagery of a pastoral nature played a crucial part in the imperial aspirations for purity and reform. But in order to make this analogy accessible, there could be no confusion who the weak, ignorant sheep in the empire were. Thus, the model of Christ as a leader is emphasised and eventually featured on the obverse of Justinian's new coins. If hermits were, in fact, causing as much frustration for the clergy as the *Acts* of the Quinisext would have us believe, it is not unreasonable that at least part of the motivation in Justinian's coin reform was to make clear that victory would only come through his God-approved leadership. It was Justinian and not the long-haired hermits who possessed the true spiritual resemblance to Christ, and therefore only this shepherd-emperor could lead the empire out of its decadence and into victorious salvation.

Eschatology and the Lamb

Consideration of current eschatological preoccupations during the late seventh century may help us unite and make sense of the themes we have discussed up until this point. A simple comparison of vocabulary can tell us a great deal about the eschatology underlying the Quinisext. Moreover, the pastoral imagery of shepherds and sheep is especially revealing for the way that specific vocabulary can be traced to specific books of the Bible.

There are four prominent words in the Bible used for lambs or sheep: ἀμνός, ἀρνίον, πρόβατον, and ποίμνιον. The usage of ποίμνιον (flock) in the NT always refers to the Church, and the usage at the Quinisext neatly follows this model for the sheep led by both Justinian and Christ.²³² Generally speaking, πρόβατον (sheep) can refer to any four-footed grazing animal, but in the NT it always refers to sheep.²³³ As a type of Christ, πρόβατον is only used once in the NT, which is excused by the fact that the passage is a quotation of the LXX version of Isaiah.²³⁴ Again, the Quinisext follows the example of the Bible and only uses πρόβατον in reference to Christian sheep, never Christ.²³⁵ The term ἀμνός (lamb)

²³² *Acts*, Logos (50), C.2 (65), C.12 (82), C.72 (154), C.79 (159); Lk. 12:32; Act. 20:28–29; 1 Pet. 5:2–3; cf. J. Jeremias, 'ποίμνιον' in TDNT, vol. VI, 499–502.

²³³ H. Preisker and S. Schulz, 'πρόβατον' in TDNT, vol. VI, 689–92.

²³⁴ Act. 8:32.

²³⁵ *Acts*, Logos, C.64, C.72, C.102.

only occurs four times in the NT.²³⁶ The occurrence in Acts 8:32, like that of πρόβατον, can be excluded from consideration because it is simply quoting the OT. This leaves one occurrence in 1 Peter 1:19, and two occurrences in John 1:29–36 – the passage quoted in C.82. Markedly, the usage of ἀμνός in both John and 1 Peter refers to Christ as a sacrifice, but in contrast to πρόβατον they emphasise the purity and perfection of a young lamb against an adult sheep. However, we have already observed how the Quinisext bypasses this metaphor of purity involved with ἀμνός in favour of Christ's substitutionary death on the cross.

Most revealing of all, however, is the term ἀρνίον (little lamb). It occurs four times in the LXX, but thirty times in the NT.²³⁷ Twenty-nine of these occurrences are found in Revelation, a concentration that cannot be ignored.²³⁸ Vitally, ἀρνίον never occurs in the *Acts* of the Quinisext, though we know it was still known in the late seventh century based upon its usage by Anastasius of Sinai.²³⁹ The absence of ἀρνίον from the *Acts* of the Quinisext would not merit further consideration if it were simply an alternative for ἀμνός. But, in fact, ἀρνίον is drenched in eschatological significance. In this regard, two passages in Revelation demand our attention. First, Revelation 17:14 reads: 'They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer (νικήσει) them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.' This verse clearly describes Christ the Lamb as a victorious figure. Again, although not as explicit, Revelation 12:11 reads, 'But they have conquered (ἐνίκησαν) him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony'.

Because Revelation depicts the final eschatological victory of God and his people over Satan and the forces of evil, the image of the conquering Lamb of God is one of the most powerful images of victory in all of Scripture. Therefore, it is somewhat surprising that this imagery does not feature in the Quinisext, concerned as it was with eschatology. Several sixth and seventh century churches in the West do, in fact, capitalise on the imagery of the conquering Lamb. Centred above the apse mosaic at Saint Catherine's

²³⁶ J. Jeremias, 'ἀμνός' in TDNT, vol. I, 338–40.

²³⁷ J. Jeremias, 'ἀρνίον' in TDNT, vol. I, 340–41.

²³⁸ Ibid., 341; cf. A. M. Moore, *Signs of Salvation: The Theme of Creation in John's Gospel*, (Cambridge, 2013), 119.

²³⁹ *Hodegos*, XVIII.27.

Monastery is a lamb being presented with ‘two cross-inscribed globes’ (Fig.10).²⁴⁰ The sixth-century Euphrasian Basilica in Poreč also features a very similar lamb mosaic at the top of its central apse (Fig.13). The Basilica of Saints Cosmas and Damian in Rome once again features a lamb mosaic above the apse, but also an image of the Lamb of God standing among the twelve apostles (Figs.14–15). We can be confident that both of these images are inspired by Revelation because the image above the apse depicts the Lamb sitting on a throne before a scroll with seven seals and the image in the apse shows the Lamb standing upon a spring of water.²⁴¹ Perhaps most vivid of all is an image of the Lamb of God in the Basilica San Vitale in Ravenna. This image is featured in the centre of the lofty vault and circumscribed by a wreath of victory (Fig.16). This provides a striking counterpoint to C.73 and the Heraclian coinage that portray the *cross* as the ‘symbol of victory’.

The sure solution to the absence of the victorious Lamb in Justinian’s propaganda is found in contemporary eschatological literature, the best example of which is the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo Methodius.²⁴² Impeccably, 692 marked 70 years (or ten ‘weeks of years’) since Muhammad’s *hijra* to Yathrib in 622.²⁴³ Because the *Apocalypse* consistently identifies Muslims as the descendants of Ishmael who will reign for seventy years, scholars have located its composition very near to 692, meaning that it provides a highly reliable view of attitudes current during the Quinisext.²⁴⁴ Benjamin Garstad has emphasised the complete dearth of references to Revelation in the *Apocalypse*.²⁴⁵ In fact, although Revelation was read by some, it was not accepted as canonical in Byzantium until the fourteenth century.²⁴⁶ This absence is explained by Revelation’s negative view of the Roman Empire, which was inconsistent with the Pseudo-Methodian narrative of a

²⁴⁰ Caner, *Late-Antique Sinai*, 27.

²⁴¹ For the lamb on the throne see Rev. 5; for the lamb and springs of water see Rev. 7:17.

²⁴² Pseudo-Methodius, *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius. An Alexandrian World Chronicle.*, B. Garstad (trans.) (Cambridge, MA, 2012); S. Brock, ‘Syriac Views of Emergent Islam’, in G. H. A. Juynboll (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, Papers on Islamic History, vol. 5 (Carbondale, 1982), 9–21; G. J. Reinink, ‘Ps.-Methodius: A Concept of History in Response to the Rise of Islam’, in A. Cameron and L. Conrad (eds), *Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East I: Problems in the Literary Source Material*, Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam (Princeton, 1992), 149–87.

²⁴³ Cf. Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology*, 54.

²⁴⁴ Garstad (ed.), *Apocalypse*, vii.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, xi.

²⁴⁶ See ‘Apocalypse’ in A. Kazhdan et al., (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991).

victorious Roman emperor.²⁴⁷ Consequently, it is no surprise that imagery of the victorious Lamb is absent from the *Apocalypse*. Instead, we find a forceful emphasis on the cross, which at one point is adorned with a wreath and taken up into heaven.²⁴⁸ Corresponding to the *Apocalypse*, the *Acts* of the Quinisext essentially ignores Revelation. The only possible reference are the four words, ‘everything is made new’, which can be plucked from Revelation without connotation of the book’s eschatological themes and could possibly even refer to something else entirely since there is no citation provided in the original MSS.²⁴⁹

Without the foundational structure of Revelation as a viable source of imperial imagery, the Quinisext could not take advantage of the Lamb imagery that was common and even prized in the West.²⁵⁰ With the image of the victorious Lamb removed from the focus of Constantinople, there was only one way to understand lamb imagery: as a weak and defenceless sacrificial animal. Consequently, Justinian made sure to disconnect this problematic metaphor from Christ and make clear that the immoral people of Byzantium were to identify themselves – and not Christ – as sheep. Therefore, we suggest that in C.82, Justinian and the bishops may have been just as eager to impose order on confusing iconography as they were to endorse the theology of Christ’s Incarnation.

²⁴⁷ See ‘king of the Romans’ in Pseudo-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, §13 (63).

²⁴⁸ Pseudo-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, §14 (65).

²⁴⁹ *Acts*, Logos (47).

²⁵⁰ Cf. n. 206 above.

Chapter 4

Popular Perceptions of Iconography

In this final chapter we hope to construct a general model for the ways in which laypeople may have perceived iconography. Any attempt to determine attitudes of the common man is, of course, notoriously difficult because surviving literary sources usually stem from the social elite and clergy.²⁵¹ With this in view, the *Q&A* or Ἐρωταποκρίσεις (c.700) of Anastasius is inestimable for our period because it preserves a large collection of questions from laypeople as well as the responses of a monk who was deeply invested in their spiritual vitality. Despite the decline of literary activity in the seventh century, the genre of Ἐρωταποκρίσεις was exceedingly popular. Problematically, the genre of Ἐρωταποκρίσεις was often viewed as a collaborative collection that could be freely added to and amended, much like how the *Tales* and other works were treated.²⁵² Munitiz has done a great deal to advance our knowledge of the complicated MS tradition of *Q&A*, but much is still unknown.²⁵³ The original work was probably composed either by Anastasius himself or his disciples as a way to preserve the correspondence he had shared with laypeople throughout his career. *Q&A* quickly gained popularity, but because it lacked structure and citations, later editors soon redacted it according to topics and added many citations that Anastasius had excluded. The first redaction was the *Collection of 23 Questions* and was followed by the *Collection of 88 Questions*.²⁵⁴ Although the uncertainty of the MS tradition is important, our usage of the text need not be as critical because most of the contested material is still clearly Anastasian and can frequently be found in his other works.²⁵⁵

The audience for *Q&A* is clearly comprised of laypeople, and one passage indicates that some of Anastasius' responses were read out loud in churches.²⁵⁶ Munitiz has suggested that Anastasius may have been communicating with groups of particularly

²⁵¹ Brown, 'Holy Man', 81.

²⁵² Munitiz (ed.), *Questions and Answers*, 18–25.

²⁵³ See 'Introduction' in M. Richard and J. Munitiz (eds), *Quaestiones et Responsiones*, XVII–LXII.

²⁵⁴ Munitiz (ed.), *Questions and Answers*, 20ff.

²⁵⁵ As an example, see the story about icons that is also found in *Tales II*, §18.

²⁵⁶ *Q&A*, Q.81.1 (196).

zealous Christians, such as the Φιλόπονοι in nearby Alexandria who were active during Anastasius' life.²⁵⁷ However, based upon the variety of questions in *Q&A* – involving concerns of both wealth and poverty – and the fact that at least some questions were read in front of entire congregations, it seems best to infer that the questions came from church communities that included a range of social classes.

The characteristic creativity of Anastasius – which we observed in his novel usage of icons as polemical weapons – is also present throughout *Q&A*, but his tone and purposes are obviously tailored to suit his audience. Marinides has carefully demonstrated how an overarching goal of Anastasius was to disseminate monastic spirituality for the benefit of 'lay piety'.²⁵⁸ The quintessential example is Q.24, where Anastasius is asked: 'What is it to pray without ceasing (I Thess. 5:17)? For it is not possible for a person who is preoccupied with house and children, and living in the world, to pray without ceasing.'²⁵⁹ In his response, Anastasius tactfully explains that prayer does not have to be audible, nor is it the prerogative of monks, because 'It is possible to pray in one's heart both in bed, and out on the road, at table, in the marketplace, and in any other place.'²⁶⁰

Anastasius' solidarity with and concern for the laity in *Q&A* is unmistakable, and one can sense his measured sensitivity against discouraging his audience due to faulty beliefs they may hold.²⁶¹ Frequently, this sensitivity leads Anastasius to profess that answers to questions vary from person to person.²⁶² It is this surprising attitude of tolerance that is most important to our discussion of iconography.

Q&A explicitly discusses icons twice, both in the context of *Tales II*. The first story, featured in Appendix 18, is reproduced in *Tales II*, §18 and will be discussed further

²⁵⁷ See 'φιλόπονοι' in G. W. H. Lampe, (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1969), §2; cf. Munitiz (ed.), *Questions and Answers*, 12.

²⁵⁸ Marinides, 'Lay Piety in Byzantium', 336–53.

²⁵⁹ *Q&A*, Q.24 (105): Τί ἐστι τὸ ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθαι; Οὐ γὰρ δυνατόν ἄνθρωπον οἴκου καὶ τέκνων ἐπιμελούμενον, καὶ ἐν κόσμῳ διάγοντα, ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθαι.

²⁶⁰ *Q&A*, Q.24 (105): Οὐ πάντως τῆς διὰ γλώσσης προσευχῆς τοῦτο ὁ Ἀπόστολος εἶρηκε, καθά φησιν καὶ ὁ Χριστός, ὅτι Οὐ πᾶς ὁ λέγων μοι Κύριε, Κύριε, εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἀλλ' ὁ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με. Ὡστε ὁ διηνεκῶς τὰ καλὰ ἐργαζόμενος, εἴτε εἰς εὐποιῖας, εἴτε καὶ ἄλλας κατὰ Θεὸν διακονίας, οὗτος ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεται· καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐν κλινῇ καὶ ἐν ὁδῷ καὶ ἐν τραπέζῃ καὶ ἐν ἀγορᾷ καὶ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ δύναται τῇ καρδίᾳ προσεύχεσθαι.

²⁶¹ For examples see *Q&A*, Q.19.1,9 (89, 92); Q.21.8 (98); Q.22.10 (102); Q.26.1 (107); Q.28.26 (124); Q.39 (145); Q.66.1 (179); Q.67.2 (181); Q.73 (189–90); Q.81.1 (196).

²⁶² See especially Q.12 (74) on variations in judgment, Q.23 (103–05) on different Paradises, Q.33 (135–36) on sin and repentance, Q.41 (147–48) on frequency of communion, Q.48 (160–61) on the three ways to be saved, Q.73 (189–90) on judging others and Q.89 (215) on death.

below.²⁶³ The second mention involves those who ‘hold in contempt’ (καταφρονητικῶς) images.²⁶⁴ This bears strong resemblance to another story in *Tales II*, where a group of Arabs vandalise a church and shoot an icon of Saint Theodore with an arrow, which causes it to bleed.²⁶⁵ Anastasius’ attitude towards icons in *Tales II* is obviously tempered by his desire to encourage suffering laypeople in simple, memorable, and vivid ways. But in *Q&A* his goal is more didactic, and therefore he is careful to avoid giving superficial solutions that ultimately lack substance. We will show how Anastasius’ flexible appropriation of icons to unique contexts demonstrates that he held a ‘low’ view of icons, and that because of his extensive work among common churches, this view was also beginning to take root among laypeople.

As an auxiliary source, we will utilise the anonymous *Miracles* of Saint Artemius (c.668). This work is valuable because it narrates the basic culture of incubation that *Q&A* occasionally refers to. Thus, although *Miracles* slightly predates our period, we can be confident that very similar practices and beliefs to those it espouses were still in circulation at the end of the seventh century.

Christian Incubation and the Afterlife

Incubation, the practice of sleeping in a shrine in order to receive divine aid, was extremely popular in Antiquity, famously in association with the cult of Asclepius.²⁶⁶ As with other elements of Antiquity, the practice of incubation was eventually absorbed by Christianity and fused with the thriving cult of saints. The *Miracles of Therapon*, an anonymous collection of eighteen miracles that Marie-France Auzépy has dated to c.695–711, is just one example showing that incubatory activity was still a popular practice in Constantinople at the turn of the seventh century.²⁶⁷ Although the stories recorded in the *Miracles* of Saint Artemius are mostly from before 668, the work as a whole was compiled very soon after the Quinisext, and therefore provides an ideal counterpart for considering

²⁶³ Munitiz (ed.), *Questions and Answers*, 71.

²⁶⁴ *Q&A*, App.24 (235).

²⁶⁵ *Tales II*, §2. Bingeli, 219–20.

²⁶⁶ E. J. Edelstein and L. Edelstein, *Asclepius: Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies* (Baltimore, 1998).

²⁶⁷ M. F. Auzépy, ‘La carrière d’André de Crète’, *BZ* 88 (1995): 1–12. For a useful survey of other Byzantine miracles see S. Efthymiadis, ‘Greek Byzantine Collections of Miracles: A Chronological and Bibliographical Survey’, *Symbolae Osloenses* 74 (1999): 195–211.

the attitudes popular during Anastasius' life.²⁶⁸ The *Miracles* of Saint Artemius feature forty-five separate accounts, most of which take place in or near the Church of the Forerunner in Constantinople where the relics of Artemius rested. Although many have questioned the coherence of the text, Alexander Kazhdan and Lee Sherry argue that the work actually displays great continuity because the stories are generally arranged in order from simple to more complex.²⁶⁹ Crucial for our interests is the fact that *Miracles* especially includes the lowest rung of society. A good indicator, as John Nesbitt notes, is the attestation in M.30 that although the church at one time had ten guards, they all died and the church was too poor to hire any replacements.²⁷⁰

Similar to the Church of Saint Demetrius discussed in Ch.1, the Church of the Forerunner seems to have been incessantly filled with cultic activity. Although it was too poor to maintain lavish mosaics and frescoes like those in Thessaloniki, the Church of the Forerunner fostered a dynamic atmosphere that appealed to the senses and induced visions of the physically present saint, Artemius.²⁷¹ Patients often stayed for long periods in this dynamic space, where 'the air was redolent with odours' from the compulsory votive lamps and the sounds of 'groans, sighs, and muffled entreaties' perpetually echoed around the stone walls.²⁷² Brubaker concedes the mention in the text of icons of Artemius, John, and Christ, but apparently overlooked the crucial role of a separate icon featuring Christ flanked by angels in M.34.²⁷³ Likewise, Brubaker conveniently discounted the mention of icons in M.31 and M.34 as interpolations, but such a complaint is irrelevant for this dissertation because even the interpolations she posits fall well within the chronological scope of our study. Therefore, it is clear that icons were an integral component in the environment of Artemius' shrine and the visions received there.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁸ V. S. Crisafulli and J. W. Nesbitt, (eds), *The Miracles of St. Artemios: A Collection of Miracle Stories by an Anonymous Author of Seventh Century Byzantium* (Leiden, 1997); J. Haldon, 'Supplementary Essay', in V. S. Crisafulli and J. W. Nesbitt (eds), *The Miracles of St. Artemios: A Collection of Miracle Stories by an Anonymous Author of Seventh Century Byzantium* (Leiden, 1997), 34.

²⁶⁹ A. Kazhdan and L. F. Sherry, 'Anonymous Miracles of St. Artemios', in A. Kazhdan and I. Hutter (eds), *AETOS: Studies in Honour of Cyril Mango* (Stuttgart-Leipzig, 1998), 200–209.

²⁷⁰ Crisafulli and Nesbitt, *The Miracles of St. Artemios*, 18.

²⁷¹ Haldon, 'Supplementary Essay', 52.

²⁷² Crisafulli and Nesbitt, *The Miracles of St. Artemios*, 26.

²⁷³ *Miracles*, Ms.17, 18, 31, 32, 34, 43. Cf. Brubaker, 'Icons Before Iconoclasm?', 1233–34.

²⁷⁴ Dal Santo, 'Visionary Body'.

In line with this cultic activity and the spiritual crisis of the late seventh century, the laity of Byzantium was increasingly concerned with questions of death and personal salvation.²⁷⁵ We have already considered in a previous chapter how death was an operative theme in the function of icons in monastic settings, but another crucial factor in the role of icons is the question of the *post mortem* activity of the persons depicted. This was particularly evident within incubatory cults.²⁷⁶ If we are to assess diligently Brubaker's claim that icons became 'transparent' at the end of the seventh century, the activity of the saints *post mortem* is vital. Simply put, if the actions of supplicants can be described as looking through a 'window', where and at whom did they believe they were looking?

Precisely for the reason of defending the cult of saints, Eustratius († after 602) famously wrote an apology defending their activity in the afterlife entitled, *On the State of Souls after Death*.²⁷⁷ Although we cannot discuss this work here, it is clear that similar questions were still in circulation at the end of the seventh century. Anastasius specifically interacts with this quandary in *Q&A*, and additional passages in the *Hodegos* can also be used to reveal Anastasius' views of the afterlife.²⁷⁸ Consequently, we will concentrate our focus on Anastasius.

The passage that most obviously alludes to the cult of saints and practice of incubation is found in Anastasius' answer to a question concerning the nature of the human soul. He first asserts that the souls of those 'who die in their sins' are unable to perform any significant action on their own.²⁷⁹ However, possibly drawing on the work of Eustratius, Anastasius affirms that the 'souls that have acquired the Holy Spirit' are able to intercede for others after death.²⁸⁰ These ideas were probably not surprising to his readers, but in the next part of his response, Anastasius expounds how exactly the mechanics of such intercession functioned:

One should realize that all the visions that take place in church buildings or at the tombs of the saints are brought about through the holy angels at God's command;

²⁷⁵ *Q&A*, Qs.7–14 (60–76).

²⁷⁶ Dal Santo, 'Visionary Body'.

²⁷⁷ N. Constatas, 'An Apology for the Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity: Eustratius Presbyter of Constantinople, *On the State of Souls after Death* (CPG 7522)', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 10 (2002): 267–85; Haldon, 'Supplementary Essay'.

²⁷⁸ See *Hodegos*, XIII.6.29–62, below.

²⁷⁹ *Q&A*, Q.19.6 (91).

²⁸⁰ *Q&A*, Q.19.7 (91).

for before the resurrection of bodies has taken place, and while the bones and fleshy parts of the saints are scattered, how is it possible for them to be recognised as fully formed men, often seen armoured and on horseback? And if you intend to disagree with me, then you tell me, please, how Paul, or Peter, or any other Apostle or martyr, each being a single person, came to be seen at the same moment very often in different places. Not even an angel can find itself at the same moment in different places or in different countries; the only one who can do that is God, the uncircumscribed.²⁸¹

Munitiz has rightly observed that this same theory is also found in *Tales II*, where Anastasius surmises that angels ‘appeared in the form of the holy fathers’.²⁸² Despite the fact that this explanation significantly undermines the validity of the saints’ cults, it is important to observe that Anastasius does not overtly condemn the general value of cultic activity in the above passage. We will return to this open-mindedness shortly.

Popular fixation with the topic of the afterlife is reflected in similar questions concerning Paradise. In Q.20, Anastasius confirms the general assumption that the souls of the righteous populate Paradise along with Christ, while all other souls inhabit Hades.²⁸³ But many were curious about the precise nature of Paradise, with some convinced it was located near ‘the land of the Indians’.²⁸⁴ Thus, in Q.23 the following query is posed: ‘What sort of Paradise should we consider to exist at present? Is it perceptible by the senses or only by the mind? Is it corruptible or incorruptible?’²⁸⁵ Anastasius’ reply is characteristic of his accommodating mentality:

We find many different opinions of the exegetes on this subject: some said that it is completely corruptible, and some that it is completely incorruptible, while still others that it has a sort of midway position, neither completely corruptible like the gardens and fruits among us, that perish and become worm-eaten and foul-smelling, nor on the other hand is it now utterly immaterial and spiritual, after the model of future incorruptibility and immortality, but “Similar”, as one exegete says, “to what

²⁸¹ Q&A, Q.19.8 (91–92): Εἰδέναι μέντοι προσήκει, ὅτι πᾶσαι αἱ ὀπτασίαι αἱ γινόμεναι ἐν τοῖς ναοῖς ἢ σοροῖς τῶν ἁγίων δι’ ἀγγέλων ἁγίων ἐπιτελοῦνται κατ’ ἐπιτροπὴν Θεοῦ, ἐπεὶ πῶς δυνατόν, μήπω τῆς ἀναστάσεως τῶν σωμάτων γεγενημένης, ἀλλ’ ἔτι τῶν ὀστέων καὶ τῶν σαρκῶν τῶν ἁγίων διεσκορπισμένων, εἶδεσθαι τούτους ἤδη ὁλοκλήρους ἄνδρας, πολλάκις ἐφ’ ἵππους καθωπλισμένους ὀπτανομένους; Εἰ δὲ ἀντιλέγειν νομίζεις, εἰπέ μοι σύ, πῶς εἰς ὑπάρχων Παῦλος, ἢ Πέτρος, ἢ ἄλλος ἀπόστολος, ἢ μάρτυς, κατ’ αὐτὴν τὴν ὥραν πολλάκις ἐν πολλοῖς τόποις ὀπτάνεται; Οὔτε γὰρ ἄγγελος δύναται ἐν διαφόροις τόποις ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ῥοπῇ, ἢ ἐν διαφόροις χώραις εὐρίσκεσθαι, εἰ μὴ μόνος ὁ ἀπερίγραπτος Θεός.

²⁸² See n. ‘c’ in Munitiz (ed.), *Questions and Answers*, 91. δυνάμεις τινὲς ὑπῆρχον ἀγγελικαί, ἐν σχήματι ὁφθεῖσαι τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων.

²⁸³ On being ‘with Christ’ in Paradise see Q&A, App.18.3 (67–68).

²⁸⁴ Q&A, Q.81.8 (198).

²⁸⁵ Q&A, Q.23 (103).

was the state of human beings, midway between corruption and incorruptibility, such was, and still is Paradise.”²⁸⁶

Anastasius admits that the ‘midway position’ finds support in several ways, such as Paul’s rapture experience and the destination of the thief on the cross, but then continues by mentioning yet another position:

However one should be aware that some have also proposed the following theory: just as Scripture is accustomed to speak of two Jerusalems, an earthly and a heavenly, and of two worlds, a seen and an intellectually grasped, so of two Paradises, one spiritual, that benefits the thief and Saint Paul, where they say are also the souls of the just, and another Paradise perceptible to the sense, from which the perceptible waters of the Nile and the Euphrates come forth upon the earth, and where the snake, the plants, and Eve and Adam were.²⁸⁷

It is difficult to determine where exactly Anastasius stood personally on the subject of Paradise, but we can be confident, based upon his answer to Q.19, that he believed the saints themselves were incorporeal and imperceptible to humans.²⁸⁸ However, a different case can be made for the body of Christ. Vitally, Christ was distinct from the souls of the saints because his body was the firstfruit of the general resurrection.²⁸⁹ The perception of Christ’s bodily existence in Paradise was apparently taken for granted by most Christians, and forces Anastasius to convince his opponents that Christ did *not* have a body between his death and resurrection:

Let us also descend to Hades and see there how Christ despoils the prison. Let us ask Adam, let us ask the bodies (σώματα) and mouths of the resurrected saints to tell us how they saw Christ in Hades. In what body, what nature, and what countenance did he arrive and descend into the underworld? How did he walk on the tracks of the abyss? To which nature did the gates of death open in fear? Upon encountering which form were the gate keepers of Hades horrified? Could they

²⁸⁶ *Q&A*, Q.23.1 (103–104): Πολλὰς περὶ τοῦτο δόξας τῶν ἐξηγητῶν εὐρίσκομεν. Οἱ μὲν γὰρ πάντη φθαρτὸν εἶναι ἔφησαν, οἱ δὲ πάντη ἄφθαρτον, ἕτεροι δὲ μέσῃν τινὰ τάξιν ἔχοντα, μήτε ὀλοτελῶς φθαρτὸν κατὰ τοὺς παρ’ ὑμῖν κήτους τε καὶ καρποὺς τοὺς φθειρομένους καὶ σκωληκιῶντας καὶ δυσωδοῦντας, μήτε μὲν πάλιν κατὰ τὴν μέλλουσαν ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ ἀθανασίαν ἄλλόν τε καὶ πνευματικὸν εἰς ἅπαν νῦν τυγχάνοντα, ἀλλ’ *Οἷός φησιν ὑπῆρχεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος μέσος φθορᾶς καὶ ἀφθαρσίας γενόμενος, τοιοῦτος ἦν καὶ ἔτι ἐστὶν ὁ παράδεισος.*

²⁸⁷ *Q&A*, Q.23.3 (104): Εἰδέναι δὲ προσήκει ὅτι περὶ τινες κάκεινο εἰπεῖν διανοήθησαν, ὅτι ὥσπερ δύο Ἱερουσαλὴμ οἶδε λέγειν ἡ Γραφή, ἐπίγειον καὶ οὐράνιον, καὶ δύο κόσμους, ὁρώμενον καὶ νοούμενον, οὕτω καὶ δύο παραδείσους, ἓνα πνευματικὸν τὸν κατὰ τὸν ληστὴν καὶ τὸν ἅγιον Παῦλον, ἔνθα φασὶν εἶναι καὶ τὰς τῶν δικαίων φυλάς, καὶ ἕτερον παράδεισον αἰσθητόν, ὅθεν ταῦτα τὰ αἰσθητὰ καὶ Νειλῶα καὶ Εὐφρατήσια ὕδατα ἐδπορεύονται ἐπὶ γῆς, ἔνθα καὶ ὁ ὄφις, καὶ τὰ φυτὰ, καὶ ἡ Εὐά, καὶ ὁ Ἀδὰμ ἐτύγχαμεν·

²⁸⁸ Discussed above.

²⁸⁹ 1 Cor. 15:20.

have seen the divine nature bare? Begone! “No man hath seen God at any time.” Then, what? Could it have been the flesh of Christ that they beheld? Not at all. For that was lying full of God, dead and motionless in the tomb... We saw him in the tomb, and he had no soul, nor the spirit of man. And we saw him in Hades, and he had neither body (σῶμα) nor blood, nor bones, nor thickness, nor a material form, but the intellectual soul alone, full of God, separated from the body.²⁹⁰

The fact that Christ was distinct from everyone else in Paradise is incredibly illuminating for our consideration of iconography. Indeed, in Brubaker’s terms, he was the only person who could potentially be viewed through the ‘transparent’ window of his holy portrait. It follows that Anastasius’ correspondents did not believe they were praying to saints who were actually wearing armour or riding horses in Paradise, for even if the saints were visually perceptible (which they were not), it was common knowledge that the souls of animals were entirely absent from Paradise.²⁹¹ Finally, we may deduce that nobody actually believed that icons of the Virgin and Child depicted a current reality in Paradise, for it was universally known from Scripture, the Creed, and the Fathers that the adult body of Christ had ascended and was ‘seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty’.²⁹² Therefore, portraits such as the B.3 icon (Fig.3) must have served to emphasise Mary’s role as Θεοτόκος, thereby inspiring an exercise of *memory* and a focus of contemplation not so different from that practiced in the monastic realm.

Although Anastasius is careful to not condemn explicitly the cult of saints in Q.19 (above), he seems to have been strongly suspicious of miraculous dreams and visions. Specifically, Anastasius’ logical and ‘scientific’ mind reveals a measured scepticism

²⁹⁰ *Hodegos*, XIII.6.29–62. Κατέλθωμεν καὶ ἐν τῷ ἄδῃ καὶ ἴδωμεν ἐκεῖ Χριστόν, πῶς σκυλεύει τὸ δεσμωτήριον. Ἐρωτήσωμεν τὸν Ἀδάμ, ἐρωτήσωμεν τὰ σώματα καὶ τὰ στόματα τῶν ἀναστάντων ἁγίων, ὅπως εἶπωσιν ἡμῖν, πῶς ἐωράκασιν ἐν τῷ ἄδῃ Χριστόν, ποίῳ σώματι, ποία φύσει, ποία μορφῇ ἦλθε καὶ κατήλθεν ἐν τοῖς καταχθονίοις, πῶς ἐν ἵχνεσιν ἀβύσσου περιεπάτησε, ποία φύσει ἠνοίγησαν φόβῳ πύλαι θανάτου, ποίαν ιδέαν ἰδόντες οἱ πωλοῦ τοῦ ἔδου ἔφριξαν; Ἄρα τὴν θεῖαν φύσιν ἐωράκασιν γυμνήν; Ἀπαγε. Θεὸν γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἐώρακε πώποτε. Ἀλλὰ τί; Ἄρα τὴν σάρκα τοῦ δεσπότη ἐθεάσαντο; Οὐδαμῶς. Αὕτη γὰρ ἔνθεος ἐν τῷ τάφῳ νεκρὰ καὶ ἀκίνητος ἔκειτο... Ἐν δὲ τῷ τάφῳ εἶδομεν αὐτόν, καὶ οὐκ εἶχε ψυχὴν, οὔτε ἑνὶ πνεύματι. Ἐν δὲ τῷ ἄδῃ εἶδομεν αὐτόν, καὶ οὐκ εἶχε σῶμα, οὔτε αἷμα, οὔτε ὀστέα, οὔτε πάχος, οὔτε ὕλικόν εἶδος, ἀλλὰ μόνην ψυχὴν νοερὰν ἔνθεον σώματος κεχωρισμένην. Cf. Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 60–61.

²⁹¹ *Q&A*, Q.21.6 (97); *Hodegos* II.5.55–65.

²⁹² For Scriptural mentions of Christ at the right hand of God see Lk. 22:69, Act. 8:55, Col. 3:1–2; cf. Munitiz (ed.), *Questions and Answers*, 95; cf. *Ladder*, §27.47 (1109C); for the importance and artistic depiction of the Resurrection see A. Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 69–81; for contemporary importance of the Creed see *Acts*, C.78 (159).

regarding miracles and visions.²⁹³ Climacus had called those who believed in visions of martyrs ‘fools’ because most often such visions were actually demons in disguise, but Anastasius took a more measured approach.²⁹⁴ Accordingly, when asked about the provenance of dreams and why they ‘often turn out true’ Anastasius gave the following reply:

Solomon has said, dreams excite fools, and that is why we urge no one to believe or accept them lest demons take the opportunity from there to deceive and lead us astray, as has happened to some. *However dreams are often due to the actions and preoccupations we have during the day.* Again they are brought on by the demons, or are made up of the fantasies caused by one’s digestion, or may come from God – for quite often the holy angels guide us or frighten us with dreams [emphasis added].²⁹⁵

Thus, while he includes the monastic idea that dreams come from demons, Anastasius also judiciously observes that dreams are often a reflection of daily thoughts and activities. At other points, he exhibits similar sensible attitudes, such as when he insists that many signs and wonders are not what they seem, but may be tests from God.²⁹⁶ Another informative example is found when he warns that although certain ‘soothsayers and ventriloquists’ can predict floods when there is heavy rainfall, they are ‘completely ignorant’ if you ask them to provide precise measurements of the rise in floodwaters.²⁹⁷ This rationalistic attitude may help to explain how Anastasius could tolerate fantastic miracles in the *Tales* (such as the bleeding icon of Theodore) for the purpose of general encouragement, while giving more restrained advice for the practical and daily needs of laypeople in *Q&A*.

In closing this section, we can deduce from the writings of Anastasius that there were varied views concerning the activities of the saints and their appearance after death. Although Anastasius was willing to countenance such a range views, he was nonetheless eager to gently guide his readers towards better understanding. Therefore, he adeptly draws

²⁹³ For the scientific mind of Anastasius, see Munitiz (ed.), *Questions and Answers*, 17.

²⁹⁴ *Ladder*, §3.29 (672A–B); cf. §23.19 (968C–D).

²⁹⁵ *Q&A*, Q.72 (188–89): Εἴρηται μὲν τῷ Σολομῶντι, ὅτι ἐνύπνια ἀναπτεροῦσιν ἄφρονας, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο παραγγελλόμεθα μὴ πιστεύειν, μὴ δὲ καταδέχεσθαι αὐτά, ἵνα μὴ ἄδειαν ἐντεῦθεν οἱ δαίμονες λαβόντες, πλανήσαντες ἀπατήσωσιν ἡμᾶς, ὅπερ τινὲς ὑπέμειναν. Ὅμως συμβαίνουσι τὰ ἐνύπνια πολλάκις ἐκ τῶν πράξεων ἢ λογισμῶν ἡμῶν, ὧν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἔχομεν. Γίνονται δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ δαιμόνων, γίνονται καὶ ἀπὸ στομάχου φαντασίαι, γίνονται καὶ ἀπὸ Θεοῦ· πολλάκις γὰρ οἱ ἅγιοι ἄγγελοι δι’ ἐνυπνίων ὁδηγοῦσιν ἢ ἐκφοβοῦσιν ἡμᾶς. Cf. Sirach 34[31]:1.

²⁹⁶ *Q&A*, Q.62 (174–75).

²⁹⁷ *Q&A*, Q.79.3 (194).

upon common knowledge (e.g. the decomposition of human bodies) and shared opinions (e.g. souls of animals were not eternal) in order to provide his audience with a argument appropriate to their situation. If we extend this attitude to images, therefore, we would suppose that while some holy portraits were probably being viewed as transparent conduits to the divine, there is ample evidence for other perspectives to have co-existed. With these inferences in mind, we will now consider how Anastasius encouraged more ‘rationalistic’ views of icons on the part of spiritually mature Christians.

Lay Piety

This section revolves around the concept of divine indwelling and the consequent spiritual responsibilities of the person being indwelt. Munitiz has helpfully used terms such as ‘pastoral’ to describe the tone of *Q&A*, while Haldon has emphasised how its ambiguity is indicative of ‘the pluralism of practice within neo-Chalcedonian Christianity’, but neither has ventured to locate a core theological *ethos* of the work.²⁹⁸ Here we will argue that the concept of divine indwelling acts as both the ideological and theological foundation of *Q&A*, and thereby allows Anastasius to bridge a gap by disseminating monastic spirituality for the benefit of the laity. As a result, Anastasius’ theology indirectly encouraged his lay audience to adopt a ‘low’ perspective of icons resembling that of the monastic world.

In *Q&A*, the pervasive concept of divine indwelling is designated by several different verbs and involves various agents. The most explicit vocabulary includes ἐνοικέω and its cognates, κατοικοῦν and οἰκέω (with a preposition).²⁹⁹ This indwelling can be performed by any member of the Trinity, and sometimes even by all three cooperatively.³⁰⁰ In addition to explicit vocabulary of ‘indwelling’, a Christian can also ‘receive’ or ‘possess’

²⁹⁸ Munitiz, *Questions and Answers*, 14; Haldon, ‘The Works of Anastasius’, 131.

²⁹⁹ Cf. *Hodegos*, I.1.4–5, where Anastasius asserts, ‘It is necessary to have a holy life and the spirit of God dwelling within’ (ὅτι δεῖ προηγουμένως βίον σεμνὸν καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνοικον ἔχειν). For Anastasius’ own experience of divine indwelling see *Hexaemeron*, XII.v.6, ‘Do not cease, Church of God, pure dove of the Holy Spirit, your inhabitation and stirring in my heart and giving birth to many fledglings through me’ (Μὴ παύσῃ, ἡ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἄσπιλος περιστερὰ ἐκκλησία Θεοῦ, ἐν τῇ ἐμῇ καρδίᾳ ἐνοικοῦσα καὶ ἐμπεριπατοῦσα καὶ πολλοὺς νεοσσοὺς δι’ ἐμοῦ γεννῶσα.); cf. Marinides, 347. Cf. Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:22; Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:14.

³⁰⁰ See excerpt from Q.6 below for mention of the entire Trinity indwelling.

a divine agent.³⁰¹ It is valuable to observe how such language varies from the privilege of Justinian II, who at the Quinisext was described as being ‘filled’ by the spirit of God due to his education from the personified motherly figure, Wisdom.³⁰² The focus is on Justinian’s moral prudence and character rather than the actual indwelling of the divine.

The answers to the first two questions of *Q&A* set a precedent for the rest of the work. In the first question, Anastasius is asked, ‘What is the sign of the true and perfect Christian?’, to which he proffers a paraphrase of John 14:21–23: ‘The one who loves me will keep my commandments, and I shall love such persons and show them myself, and we shall come, I and my father, and we shall make our dwelling in them (καὶ μονὴν παρ’ αὐτῷ ποιήσομεν).’³⁰³ Anastasius proceeds to explain that if Christ does not dwell (οικήσει) in the ‘house’ of one’s soul, that person is not a Christian.³⁰⁴ In Q.2, Anastasius cleverly avers that just as a pregnant woman can discern the baby inside her so also can the Christian discern whether or not ‘Christ has taken up his abode inside (ἐνοικήσει)’ them.³⁰⁵

The most explicit representation of Anastasius’ theology, however, is found shortly later in Q.6. Here, he again uses John 14:23 to buttress his fixation on divine indwelling. The passage recalls the story of a Sinai monk who expressed his shock regarding an ascetic who lived apart from the spiritual services of a church. The ascetic eloquently replied:

‘Sir, all the services and liturgies and feasts and communions and sacrifices take place *for this purpose, that one may be purified from sins, and that God may dwell (οικήσει) in that person*, in accordance with what Christ said, We, I and my father, shall come and make our dwelling by him (Jn. 14:23), and I shall inhabit (ἐνοικήσω) and stroll among them (2 Cor 6:16). So when someone becomes the vivified, God-made temple of God, and the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit inhabit (οική) and stroll within that person, the soul, the God-bearer, *loses all desire for constructed churches, or for visible sacrifices, or for material services, and human feasts...* The person judged worthy to possess these things, as one divinized through the indwelling (ἐνοικήσει) of God within him- or herself, this

³⁰¹ For the use of the term ‘receive’ (λαβὼν) see *Q&A*, Q.82 (199).

³⁰² *Acts*, Logos (50).

³⁰³ *Q&Q*, Q.1 (51).

³⁰⁴ *Q&A*, Q.1.2 (51): Οὐκοῦν διὰ τούτων μαντάνομεν, ὅτι διὰ μὲν τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῶν ἔργων τῶν καλῶν οἰκοδομεῖται ὁ οἶκος τῆς ψυχῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ νοῦς ἡμῶν· ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἔλθῃ καὶ οἰκήσῃ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης ἐν ἡμῖν, εὐδελον ὡς οὐκ ἤρесе αὐτῷ τὸ ὑφ’ ἡμῶν γεγόμενον αὐτῷ οἰκοδόμημα. Cf. similar description in *Hodegos*, II.6.20–21.

³⁰⁵ *Q&A*, Q.2.1 (52–53): “Ὡςπερ οὖν ἐκείνη οὐ δεῖται παρ’ ἐτέρου γινῶναι τοῦτο, ἀλλ’ αὐτὴ ἐξ ἑαυτῆς οἶδεν ἐν ἑαυτῇ ἔκ τε τῆς ἀναστολῆς τῶν αἱμάτων, ἔκ τε τῶν ἔνδον τοῦ βρέφους σκιρτημάτων, ὅτι συνέλαβεν, οὕτω καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ οὐ δεῖται παρ’ ἐτέρου μαθεῖν, ἡνίκα ἐνοικήσει ὁ Χριστὸς ἐν αὐτῇ διὰ Πνεύματος ἁγίου.

person can truly adore them within the self, or rather can adore the self that is within oneself, and hold in veneration the self as seeing one's flesh existing as the tent of God (Rev. 21:3), the house the altar and sanctuary of God. *Such a person holds in veneration (σέβει) neither heaven, nor the angels, nor any visible sacrifice, nor anything else that is in the world,* as being superior to the personal temple of the body, in which that person sees indwelling (κατοικοῦν) the fullness of the Trinity' [emphasis added].³⁰⁶

Undoubtedly, this response was largely driven by the displacement of Christians and the consequent inaccessibility of churches, which put them in a situation similar to the ascetic in the story. But this passage neatly illustrates and connects three important points. First, it makes clear how divine indwelling supersedes ritualistic religion by taking priority as the ultimate 'purpose' of Christianity. Second, it demonstrates Anastasius' appropriation of a specific monastic spirituality to bridge the gap to laypeople; especially those affected by social upheaval. Finally, the loss of desire for and veneration of peripheral religious apparatuses has profound and obvious implications for the role of iconography: if a Christian has the Deity dwelling inside them, there is simply no need to treat icons as anything more than helpful religious paraphernalia.

As one might anticipate, this model of spiritual anthropology paves the path for tremendous individual license in the Christian faith, which Anastasius seems to endorse in Q.97:

So the Christian should possess a spiritual 'ephoud' (ἐφοῦδ), i.e. the Holy Spirit which illumines the person and displays what is advantageous. Those who have this tell us that when they ask God about a particular subject, if their request is truly to God's liking, the grace of the Holy Spirit overshadows them at once.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ Q&A, Q.6.3–5 (58–59): Πᾶσαι αἱ συνάξεις καὶ λειτουργίαι καὶ ἑορταὶ καὶ κοινωναὶ θυσίαι ὧ ἄνθρωπε, διὰ τοῦτο γίνονται, ὅπως καθαρῶς ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτοῦ, καὶ οἰκίῃ ὁ Θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ, κατὰ τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰρημένον, ὅτι *Ἐλευσόμεθα ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ καὶ μονὴν παρ' αὐτῷ ποιήσομεν*, καὶ *Ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω*. Ἐπὶ οὖν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ναὸς ἑμψυχος καὶ θεόπλαστος γένηται τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον οἰκῇ καὶ ἐμπεριπατῇ ἐν αὐτῷ, ἀφίσταται ἡ ψυχὴ ἡ θεοφόρος ἀπὸ παντὸς πόθου ἐκκλησιῶν κτιστῶν, καὶ θυσιῶν ὁρατῶν, καὶ συνάξεων ὑλικῶν, καὶ ἑορτῶν ἀνθρωπίνων... ἅπερ ὁ ἀξιώθεις κτήσασθαι, ὡς θεωθεὶς τῇ ἐνοικίῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῇ ἐν αὐτῷ, αὐτὸς ἐν ἑαυτῷ, καὶ ἑαυτὸν σέβει ὁρῶν αὐτοῦ τὴν σάρκα *σκηνὴν Θεοῦ* καὶ οἶκον καὶ θυσιαστήριον καὶ ἀγίασμα Θεοῦ ὑπάρχουσιν. Ὁ δὲ τοιοῦτος οὔτε οὐρανόν, οὔτε ἀγγέλους, οὔτε θυσίαν ὁρωμένην, οὐδ' ἄλλο τι τῶν ἐν κόσμῳ σέβει ὑπὲρ τὸν ἴδιον τοῦ σώματος ναόν, ἐν ᾧ ὁρᾷ τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς Τριάδος κατοικοῦν.

³⁰⁷ Q&A, Q.97.3 (223): Διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ὁ Χριστιανὸς ἔχειν ἐφοῦδ πνευματικόν, τουτέστι τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐλλάμπον αὐτὸν καὶ δεικνύον τὰ συμφέροντα· διηγοῦνται γὰρ ἡμῖν οἱ τοῦτο ἔχοντες, ὡς ἡνίκα τὸν Θεὸν περὶ πράγματος ἐρωτήσωσιν, εἰ ἄρα καὶ εὐάρεστόν ἐστι τὸ ἐρώτημα, εὐθέως ἐπισκιάζει αὐτοῖς ἡ χάρις τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος. Cf. *Ladder*, §28.41 (1136D).

However, in the very same section he is also careful to guard against abuse of this license, which could easily degenerate into the renegade spirituality of those hermits condemned at the Quinisext. Thus, Anastasius wisely instructs, ‘Someone who makes prayers in isolation, and gains what is asked for, often falls into arrogance, but if several persons are making the same prayer, all remain in a state of humility.’³⁰⁸ With this advice, Anastasius expertly fuses the independence of divine indwelling with the need for communal integration and expression.

Throughout his various works, Anastasius is deeply concerned about the genuine spiritual maturation of Christians. Indicative of this concern is a passage in one of Anastasius’ sermons where he expresses his frustration about some people merely ‘saluting the crosses and icons’, and stresses that church attendance should involve forgiveness of sins through repentance.³⁰⁹ This concern was more than likely augmented by the increasing reality of Christians lacking access to priests, churches, and the sacraments. Perhaps this dire situation inspired Anastasius to infuse monastic elements throughout his instructions. Regardless, Anastasius’ decades of teaching essentially validated a spiritual environment in which icons, visions, and miracles of saints were all subjugated to the priority of the individual Christian’s galvanised inner piety.

Most crucially, Anastasius underscores in an exceedingly perspicacious passage that in the end only the mature Christian can hope to procure benefit from visions and icons anyway. The first part of the passage warning against dreams has already been quoted above, but here it basically restricts usage of religious paraphernalia exclusively to those Christians with an indwelling holiness:

Again, as the soul is rational and gifted with intellect, it often foresees and forewarns a person of certain things, *especially that soul that possesses the Holy Spirit*. As God says, I pour out my spirit upon all flesh (that is faithful), and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream with dreams. *So any dreams you see that lead you to*

³⁰⁸ *Q&A*, Q.97.1 (223): ὁ γὰρ καταμόνας αἰτῶν καὶ λαμβάνων τὸ αἶτημα πολλάκις εἰς τυφὸν ἐμπίπτει, πλειόνων δὲ εὐχομένων πάντες ἐν ταπεινότητι μένουσιν.

³⁰⁹ *Homilia*, (832C–833A): οὐ γὰρ τὸ εἰσερχεσθαι ἐν τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησίᾳ, καὶ τὰς θείας μορφώσεις τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων, καὶ τοὺς τιμίους σταυροὺς ἀσπάζεσθαι, τοῦτο ἀρεστόν· οὐδὲ τῷ ὕδατι ἐκπλῦναι τὰς χεῖρας, τοῦτο κάταρσις, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀποφυγεῖν καὶ ἀποπλῦναι τὸν ῥύπον τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων, καὶ ἐξομολογήσει, καὶ δάκρυσι, καὶ ψυχῇ τεταπεινωμένη ἀποσμήχειν τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων τὰς σειρὰς, καὶ οὕτως προσέρχεσθαι τοῖς ἀχράντοις μυστηρίοις.

*compunction, and improvement, and conversion, and fear of God, these and only these you should cherish.*³¹⁰

This passage makes explicit an implicit theme present throughout the *Miracles* of Artemius, namely that only sincere and obedient Christians can expect to receive a vision during incubation.³¹¹ Such a philosophy can shed precious light on a final iconographic episode contained in both *Q&A* and *Tales II*. The story recounts two men who enter a church in order to pray in front of an icon of Christ. One of the men perceives the icon of Christ repeatedly averting its gaze from him. This causes the man to fall to his face and, ‘with many tears’, cry out: ‘Do not turn your face away from me, Lord, but look upon on me and take pity, for I know I am a sinner.’³¹² This exchange starkly contradicts the congenial mood of that oft-cited soldier who conversed with the icon of Saint George, and may reveal the crux of Anastasius’ personal opinion of icons: If they were to be used, they should help catalyse ‘compunction’ or some other strong spiritual emotion that leads to genuine repentance and the growth of the individual Christian. They had no automatic power or quality in or of themselves.

Conclusion

Of the three social perspectives considered in this dissertation (the monastic, the imperial, the popular), the *Miracles* of Artemius suggests that the popular perspective was that most likely to be associated with a ‘high’ view of icons. However, the laity was not uniform in its perceptions towards icons, as even a simple survey of corollary subjects, such as the afterlife, reveals. The lower social classes of Constantinople – vividly represented in the *Miracles* of Artemius – apparently placed greater expectations on icons than the people with whom Anastasius interacted, many of whom had been forced to adapt their faith to new situations under Muslim rule. The advice of Anastasius empowered

³¹⁰ *Q&A*, Q.72.2–3 (189): Πολλάκις δὲ καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ ὡς λογικὴ καὶ νοερὰ προγινώσκει καὶ προδείκνυσι τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τινὰ μάλιστα ἢ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔχουσα· φησὶ γὰρ ὁ Θεός, ὅτι Ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ Πνεύματός μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα πιστὴν, καὶ προφητεῦσουσιν οἱ υἱοὶ καὶ αἱ θυγατέρες ὑμῶν, καὶ οἱ νεανίσκοι ὑμῶν ὁράσεις ὄψονται, καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ὑμῶν ἐνυπνίοις ἐνυπνιασθήσονται. Ὅσα οὖν ἐνύπνια ὄψει ποιοῦντά σοι κατάνυξιν, καὶ διόρθωσιν, καὶ ἐπιστροφὴν, καὶ φόβον Θεοῦ, ταῦτα μόνον ἀγάπησον. Cf. Act. 2:17 [Joel 2:28].

³¹¹ Crisafulli and Nesbitt, *The Miracles of St. Artemios*, 26; Haldon, ‘Supplementary Essay’, 49.

³¹² *Tales II*, §18. Τότε ρίπτει ἑαυτὸν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον ὁ πατρίκιος, καὶ ἐν δάκρυσι πολλοῖς ἐπεκαλεῖτο τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν λέγων· Μὴ ἀποστρέψῃς, δέσποτα, τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλ’ ἐπίβλεπον ἐπ’ ἐμὲ καὶ ἐλέησόν με. Ὅτι μὲν ἁμαρτωλὸς εἰμι ἐπίσταμαι.

Christians ostracised from their churches and permitted a 'low' view of icons, visions, and miracles akin to that of the monastic world with the main goal of fostering spiritual growth. The understanding that Christians had the divine dwelling within them and that they were expected to act in ways appropriate to such indwelling greatly reduced both the need to access the divine through a holy portrait or the expectation of receiving any miracles from them. Ultimately, Anastasius relegates the role of icons to a secondary level and allows individual Christians to decide how they will incorporate them in their daily lives.

Conclusion

Although our discussion has been far from exhaustive, we have offered considerable evidence to deconstruct the dominant linear model of Iconoclasm. In these closing pages we will attempt to integrate our findings into a new, though incomplete, paradigm for perceptions of Byzantine iconography during the period of c.680–720. Based upon this new paradigm, we will offer a few brief remarks concerning aspects not directly considered in this dissertation.

Because the last three chapters have involved careful focus on distinct aspects of iconography, it is necessary to emphasise how each is fundamentally related to the other and also to the Byzantine Empire as a whole. Perhaps the single most unifying element across Byzantium and the Eastern Christian World in our period is the threatening presence of invading foreigners. Ch.4 drew heavily on this phenomenon in order to highlight the shift in popular spiritual dynamics around Sinai. But the reality is that the majority of the empire had experienced at least some level of adversity caused by invaders. A clear example is the aforementioned siege of Constantinople (674–678). In order to reach the capital, the Muslims had travelled by both land and sea, leaving a trail of destruction across the interior and southern coast of Asia Minor, respectively. Moreover, the Muslim activity was not the only cause of social upheaval, for the Slavs and Bulgars were also intermittently sacking and occupying the Balkans. In order to substantiate this empire-wide social instability, we turn once again to the *Acts* of the Quinisext Council. Considering the strategic location of Constantinople, the ‘barbarian incursions’ alluded to in the Quinisext probably referred to *both* the Muslims as well as the Slavs and Bulgars.³¹³ Most noteworthy are C.18 and C.37, for they address precisely the issues of inaccessibility that we discussed in Ch.4. We read in C.18:

In the case of clerics who have fled abroad allegedly on account of barbarian incursion... we command that they should return once again to their own Churches

³¹³ See *Acts*, C.8 (79–80), C.18 (93–95), C.37 (115–116), C.39 (117–118).

and should not abandon (καταλιμπάνειν) these same for a long time without excuse.³¹⁴

The use of the word ‘abandon’ is particularly reminiscent of Anastasius’ interlocutors in *Q&A*, who specifically inquired how they could confess their sins in the absence of any cleric.³¹⁵ C.37 is also illustrative of the extent of social disruption throughout the empire. It is entitled, ‘Concerning bishops who live outside their own provinces on account of barbarian depredation’, and concludes by insisting, ‘Even if strict observance is circumscribed by the *necessity of the times* (τῆς ἀνάγκης καιροῦ), the boundaries of oeconomy shall not be restricted [emphasis added]’.³¹⁶ Following from this recognition of the uncertain ‘times’, we can conclude that social fragmentation was strongly felt by all. Likewise, the presence of ascetics in cities caused by these military advances was surely not confined to the environs of Constantinople and Sinai. In fact, this circumstance had been witnessed already in the early seventh century when monastic communities from across the Judean deserts were forced to flee from the invading Persians to Jerusalem or other cities even farther abroad, including Constantinople.³¹⁷

Another unifying element throughout Byzantium and the Christian East in our period is the role of monasticism. Although the themes of intercession, miracles, and especially death were successively explicated by Climacus and Ansatasius, the core concepts had been linked with monasticism ever since the example originally set by Antony. Moreover, the incredible popularity of the *Ladder* throughout the empire indicates that Climacus’ elaboration of the monastic vocation – although originally intended for the specific monastery of Rhaïthou in Sinai – intimately resonated with the intrinsic values of asceticism shared by all monks.³¹⁸ Based upon the wide monastic circulation of the *Ladder*, we can infer with reasonable certainty that the characteristics of Sinai monasticism

³¹⁴ *Acts*, C.18 (93–94): Τοὺς προφάσει βαρβαρικῆς ἐπιδρομῆς ἢ ἄλλως πως ἐκ περιστάσεως μετανάστας γενομένους κληρικοὺς... αὐτοὶς ἐν ταῖς οἰκείαις ἐκκλησίαις προστάσσομεν ἐπανέρχεσθαι καὶ μὴ ἐπὶ πολὺ ταύτας ἀπροφασίστως καταλιμπάνειν.

³¹⁵ *Q&A*, Q.53 (168).

³¹⁶ *Acts*, C.37 (115–16): Περὶ τῶν ἐξ ἐπηρείας βαρβαρικῆς ἔξω τῶν οἰκείων ἐπαρχιῶν διαγόντων ἐπισκόπων... οὐ γάρ, ὑπὸ τοῦ τῆς ἀνάγκης καιροῦ τῆς ἀκριβείας περιγραφείσης, ὁ τῆς οἰκονομίας ὅρος περιορισθήσεται.

³¹⁷ P. Booth, *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2013), 94–115.

³¹⁸ Waring, ‘Byzantine Book Culture’, 282–87.

highlighted in Ch.2 had been adopted by many other monastic communities by the end of the seventh century.³¹⁹

Furthermore, although we have concentrated our attention on Anastasius' response to social disruption, the response from other monastic leaders across the empire was likely to have been very similar. For although it is clear that Anastasius was innovative in his use of icons as polemical weapons, his spiritual anthropology was built upon basic theological principles common to the entire monastic world. In Ch.2, we underscored the connection between Climacus and Anastasius in order to highlight the role of *μνήμη τοῦ θανάτου* in monastic perceptions of iconography. But Anastasius' advice to *laypeople* drew much more generally upon the *Ladder's* overarching motif of individual progression in holiness. Again, because this idea was central to all monasticism one should hardly find it surprising if other monks throughout the empire had also realised that their own spiritual practices were the ideal recourse for Christians struggling with dislocation.

We must not fail to mention the additional possibility that *Q&A* may have directly affected lay piety in regions well beyond Sinai between its compilation in c.700 and the beginnings of Iconoclasm around 730. Despite the fastidious work of Marcel Richard and Munitiz in delineating the families in the MSS tradition of *Q&A*, specifics of its circulation in our period are still mostly unknown.³²⁰ On the surface, it seems unlikely that *Q&A* could have had much impact during the short span between 700 and 730. However, because its content is sourced from Anastasius' entire career, we must recognise that many of his responses were originally received years or even decades before they were assembled into a single work. This extended time frame increases the possible influence of Anastasius' teaching upon the laity before Iconoclasm. Moreover, the hundreds of surviving MSS and our growing knowledge of how literacy operated in Byzantium should prevent us from assuming that *Q&A* had only a small or local impact.³²¹

Having shown the connections between the various issues addressed in the chapters of this dissertation and how those issues relate to the empire at large, we may now return to the linear models of Ch.1 and substantiate our critique with more tangible examples. Based

³¹⁹ See n. 116 above.

³²⁰ See 'Introduction' in M. Richard and J. Munitiz (eds), *Quaestiones et Responsiones*, XVII–LXII.

³²¹ Waring, 'Byzantine Book Culture'.

upon our findings, Kitzinger’s model should be decisively abandoned because the period of 680–720 offers no reliable indication that a foreboding ‘eruption’ against icons was in sight. Without discounting the possibility that Iconoclasm has at least some roots in our period, it is simply no longer sufficient to insist that any unchecked growth of the cult of icons unilaterally ‘caused’ Iconoclasm. With regard to Brubaker’s model, we similarly suggest that it be abandoned for one more faithful to the diversity represented in iconography before Iconoclasm. Judging from the material evidence alone, it is apparent that εὐλογίαι and *ex voto* images played a major role in the shaping of perceptions towards iconography in Byzantium at this time. When we add the numerous references to icons in Anastasius’ corpus to the equation, such as those of the Crucifixion and Entombment, it is clear that ‘holy portraits’ only represented one specific type of iconography in the greater discussions that were taking place in the late seventh century. Brubaker’s terminology of ‘transparent windows’ relies far too heavily on later theological definitions and does not take seriously contemporary views of the afterlife or the role of the Holy Spirit. Although the reach of Anastasius’ teaching is difficult to measure accurately, we can also assume that a certain portion of Christians around Sinai would have had little need to approach ‘holy portraits’ due to their robust understanding of divine indwelling, a perspective rooted in an ascetic theology that was common to the Christian East as a whole. Accordingly, in contrast to the models of both Kitzinger and Brubaker, we suggest it is possible that a significant fraction of Byzantium may have actually been moving *away* from the perspectives of iconography that are often described as increasing in intensity and frequency, and that much of that tendency may have been driven by authors of a monastic background. For instance, the monastic profession virtually prohibited an exalted view of icons as it would either interfere with a monk’s own duty of intercession or provide him with a dishonest ‘shortcut’ in his spiritual journey, thus cheating him of a chance to ‘obtain a crown’.³²² Additionally, the *Q&A* of Anastasius strongly supports the likelihood that Christians exposed to and pressured by Islam were seriously and honestly re-considering the fundamental value of the Christian faith. In the process, their prodding questions seem

³²² *Ladder*, §4.27 (692D–693A): οὕτως καὶ ἑαυτὸν, καὶ τὸν ἐργάτην ὁ ψυχῶν προεστηκώς, μὴ βλέπει προξενῶν αὐτῷ στεφάνους, ὅσους καὶ γινώσκει αὐτὸν ὑπομένειν, κατὰ πᾶσαν ὥραν· εἴτε δι’ ὕβρεων, εἴτε δι’ ἀτιμιῶν, δι’ ἐξουδενώσεως, δι’ ἐμπαιγμῶν·

to have recovered core tenets of Christianity and rendered the importance of icons subservient to the more essential requirements of salvation.

Now that we have been exposed to Anastasius as both an uncompromising theologian (as in *Hodegos*) and an accommodating pastor figure (as in *Q&A*) we may draw some additional conclusions about his own personal views concerning icons. His scrupulous survey of heresies and orthodoxy in *Hodegos* leads us to assume that he would have certainly discussed icons if he had known of any way they were interfering with or obstructing orthodox Christianity. Likewise, had he considered icons to be as useful a tool for other aspects of Christianity as they were for polemics, he likely would have specifically endorsed them in *Q&A* in the same way he did in *Hodegos*. Ultimately, Anastasius apparently valued icons primarily for their ability to evoke spiritual emotions. He personally found this most useful in his polemics against the Monophysites, but it would not be surprising if he condoned the way icons could inspire μνήμη τοῦ θανάτου within monastic settings. For lack of a better term, we have argued that Anastasius held a ‘low’ view of icons, meaning that he viewed other features of Christianity as far more important, but was tolerant of those who found them useful for activities other than theological debates.

While the traditional historiography of Iconoclasm has cast monasticism as the champion of icon veneration, our findings in this dissertation necessitate a re-consideration. One of the favourite texts used to support the classic view is, of course, the *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschus, to which we briefly referred in Ch.2. If read with the presupposition that monks had a ‘high’ view of icons, some stories can certainly reinforce this sense. However, if one examines the text through the lens of a monastic world focussed on death, it becomes apparent that icons were not necessarily endorsed by monks in the way that scholars such as Kitzinger once thought. One of the more famous stories from the *Spiritual Meadow* corroborates this point. In §81, we read of an icon that was lowered into a dry well. Subsequently, the icon was able to miraculously retrieve water. It is noteworthy that the female protagonist of the story is simply described as ‘Christ loving’ and therefore does not represent the iconographic views of the monastic world. Such an episode recounting a miraculous icon could have simply been included without explicit endorsement, similar to the way that Anastasius included miraculous stories in the *Tales*

that he probably did not personally endorse. Two other stories in the *Spiritual Meadow* describe solitary monks who both kept an icon of the Virgin and Child in their cave.³²³ Notwithstanding the fact that one of these icons performed a ‘miracle’ of keeping candles lit, we would point out that nothing in these stories precludes the possibility that these icons were primarily used for personal contemplative exercises akin to the practice of μνήμη τοῦ θανάτου so popular in Sinai.

Although we have several reservations about introducing new generalisations for fear that they may become clichés, we cautiously suggest that the term ‘mirror’ may be a more appropriate description of how icons probably functioned in at least the monastic milieu of Byzantium. By this we primarily mean that the monk was always focused upon his own ascetic journey and what he had to achieve personally in order to climb the spiritual ladder towards God. Therefore, icons would not have made sense as a tool to bypass the constraints of daily life, but instead reminded the monk precisely that he was already in the process of ‘accessing’ the divine.

Concerning Justinian II and the authorities of the Church, it appears that they were mostly concerned with casting a strong and clear vision for the future of the empire. Thus, contrary to what most have said regarding C.82 of the Quinisext, there is no indication that they were trying to stem the tide of a cult that was threatening to undermine their authority. Rather, their decisions relating to iconography were entirely organisational. As far as we can tell, the Western Church did value images of the apocalyptic Lamb of God, but these were always incorporated into broader apocalyptic scenes and thus posed no threat as specific foci of veneration.

As attentive readers may have already observed, the major element of Byzantine society excluded from consideration in this dissertation is the military. This omission has been necessitated by the profound lack of relevant literary sources for our period. Nonetheless, if any group in Byzantium had cause for strong opinions of icons, it was the military. The use of ἀχειροποίητα such as the Camuliana image in battles had become standard practice by the late sixth century, and the use of other icons – especially those

³²³ *Meadow*, §45 (180).

depicting the Virgin – were often credited with victories during the reign of Heraclius.³²⁴ By the late seventh century, the armies of Byzantium could hardly claim a record of universal victories against their new Muslim opponents, even though the ‘God-guarded’ imperial city herself had managed to evade capture. In fact, around the turn of the seventh century, it seems as though Byzantines were finally beginning to accept the idea that the Muslim presence would be a permanent ailment. Thus, it is easy to see how the armies of Byzantium could have been frustrated at the inability of icons to bring them ultimate victory. The fact that the initial attempt to convene the pro-icon Seventh Ecumenical Council in 786 was disrupted by iconoclast soldiers may give indication of an inherent iconoclastic attitude among the military.³²⁵ Regardless, the unique way in which many soldiers’ lives were often literally staked upon the efficacy of icons practically guarantees that those soldiers would have possessed opinions of iconography distinct from all three groups we have considered heretofore.

Another group that some readers may have felt was missing from this dissertation is the Muslims. Obviously, any proper discussion of the effect of Islam upon Byzantine Iconography would require thorough examination, which we do not have room to engage in here. However, we offer one comment that may have bearing upon this dissertation. The coins minted under Abd al-Malik are fascinating for several reasons, most obvious of which may be the images of a standing figure bearing a sword (Fig.17). This figure has attracted a great deal of attention because of the possibility that it depicts Muhammad himself, which is intimated by the accompanying inscription ‘Muhammad is the prophet of God’. Despite the heretical implications, the combination of image and inscription convinces Clive Foss that the coin does, in fact, depict Muhammad.³²⁶ For our purposes, however, the intended identity of the standing figure is not crucial, because the image clearly shows a man with long, flowing hair. This particular ‘standing caliph’ coin type was minted sometime between 692 and 697, thus making it highly unlikely that it had any

³²⁴ George of Pisidia, *Expeditio Persica*, I (lines 139–53) and *Herakleias*, II (lines 12–18). A. Pertusi, *Giorgio Di Pisidia, Poemi I*, vol. VII, *Studia Patristica et Byzantina* (Ettal, 1959), 91, 252; Grabar, *L’Iconoclasme Byzantin*, 35; A. Cameron, ‘Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium’, *Past & Present* 84 (1979): 18–24.

³²⁵ G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (New Brunswick, 1969), 178.

³²⁶ C. Foss, *Arab-Byzantine Coins: An Introduction, with a Catalogue of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), 69–70; R. Hoyland, ‘Writing the Biography of the Prophet Muhammad: Problems and Solutions’, *History Compass* 5 (2007): 593–96.

effect on the Quinisext. However, it remains possible that this long-haired imagery may have contributed to the other factors that we have suggested influenced Justinian II's change in the Christ portrait on his own coins, which took place after his return to power in 705.

The arguments presented in this dissertation demonstrate that the understanding of iconography in the period before Iconoclasm is in serious need of reconsideration. If the trajectory of this dissertation is correct, it is likely that other regions besides Constantinople and Sinai would have been associated with divergent and diverse iconographic tendencies and perspectives. As pivotal as Iconoclasm is for the history of Byzantium, we hope our findings will stimulate iconographic discussion that is unhindered by the anachronism it often causes. If such emancipated discussion can be achieved, we will be in far better position to appreciate the irreducible complexities of Byzantine iconography as they existed before Iconoclasm.

Appendix



Fig.1

(Image from <http://www.medievalists.net/2011/01/25/byzantium-a-friendly-society/byzantine-mosaic/>)



Fig.2

(Image from <http://campus.belmont.edu/honors/SinaiIcons/WIcons08.jpg>)



Fig.3

(Image from <http://campus.belmont.edu/honors/SinaiIcons/WIcons02.jpg>)



Fig.4

(Image from <http://campus.belmont.edu/honors/SinaiIcons/7thSinaiAscension300.jpg>)



Fig.5

(Image from <http://campus.belmont.edu/honors/SinaiIcons/WIcons01.jpg>)



Fig.6

(Image from K. -H. Uthemann (ed.), *Viae Dux*, 204)



Fig.7

(Image from <http://www.oberlin.edu/images/Art335/Art335b.html>)



Fig.8

(Image from <http://campus.belmont.edu/honors/SinaiIcons/7thSinaiTripWing.jpg>)



Fig.9

(Image from <http://campus.belmont.edu/honors/SinaiIcons/WIcons07.jpg>)



Fig.10

(Image from <http://www.cca-roma.org/en/mosaic-transfiguration-st-catherine>)



Fig.11

(Image from <http://www.doaks.org/museum/online-exhibitions/byzantine-emperors-on-coins/sixth-seventh-centuries-emperors-491-717/solidus-of-justinian-ii-685-695>)



Fig.12

(Image from <http://www.doaks.org/museum/online-exhibitions/byzantine-emperors-on-coins/sixth-seventh-centuries-emperors-491-717/solidus-of-justinian-ii-705-711>)



Fig.13

(Image from
<http://www.trekearth.com/gallery/Europe/Croatia/Coast/Istarska/porec/photo1284479.htm>
 and <http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-lamb-of-god-detail-in-ceiling-mosaic-of-porec-basilica-of-christ-10560262.html>)



Fig.14

(Image from http://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2015/03/christian-perfection-and-mystery-of_20.html)



Fig.15

(Image from <https://understandingrome.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/cd5.jpg>)



Fig.16

(Image from

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/97/Agnus_Dei_in_cupola.jpg)



Fig.17

(Image from <http://jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/collection/4/837/840>)

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